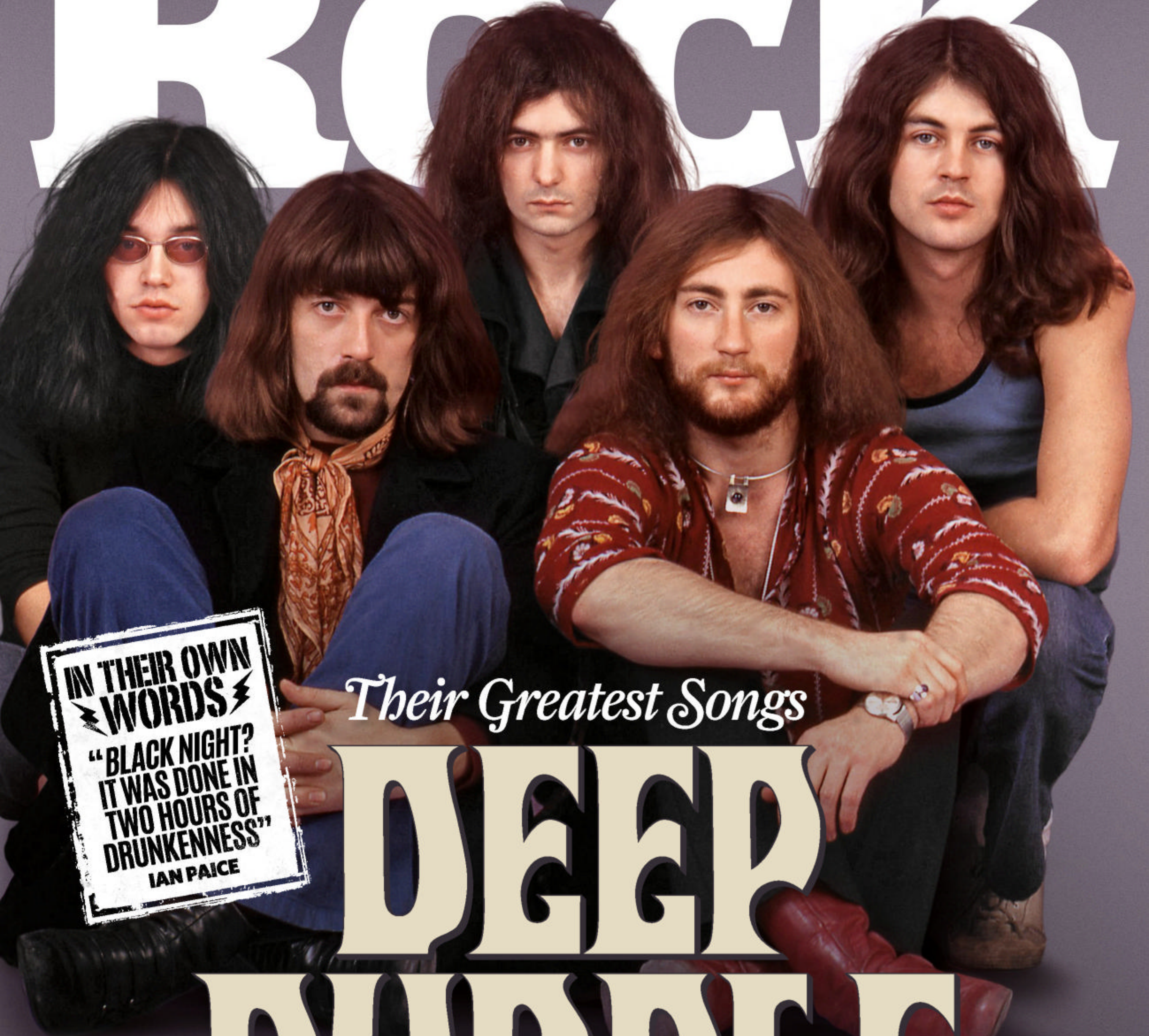
SCORPIONS – THE CHAOS OF *LOVE AT FIRST STING*

SHERYL CROW – "I'D BEEN A GOOD GIRL – THEN THE PARTYING STARTED"

GARY CLARK JR. – "OH YEAH, I WAS A BIG NERD"

★CLASSIC★ ROCK



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"BLACK NIGHT? IT WAS DONE IN TWO HOURS OF DRUNKENNESS"
IAN PAICE

Their Greatest Songs

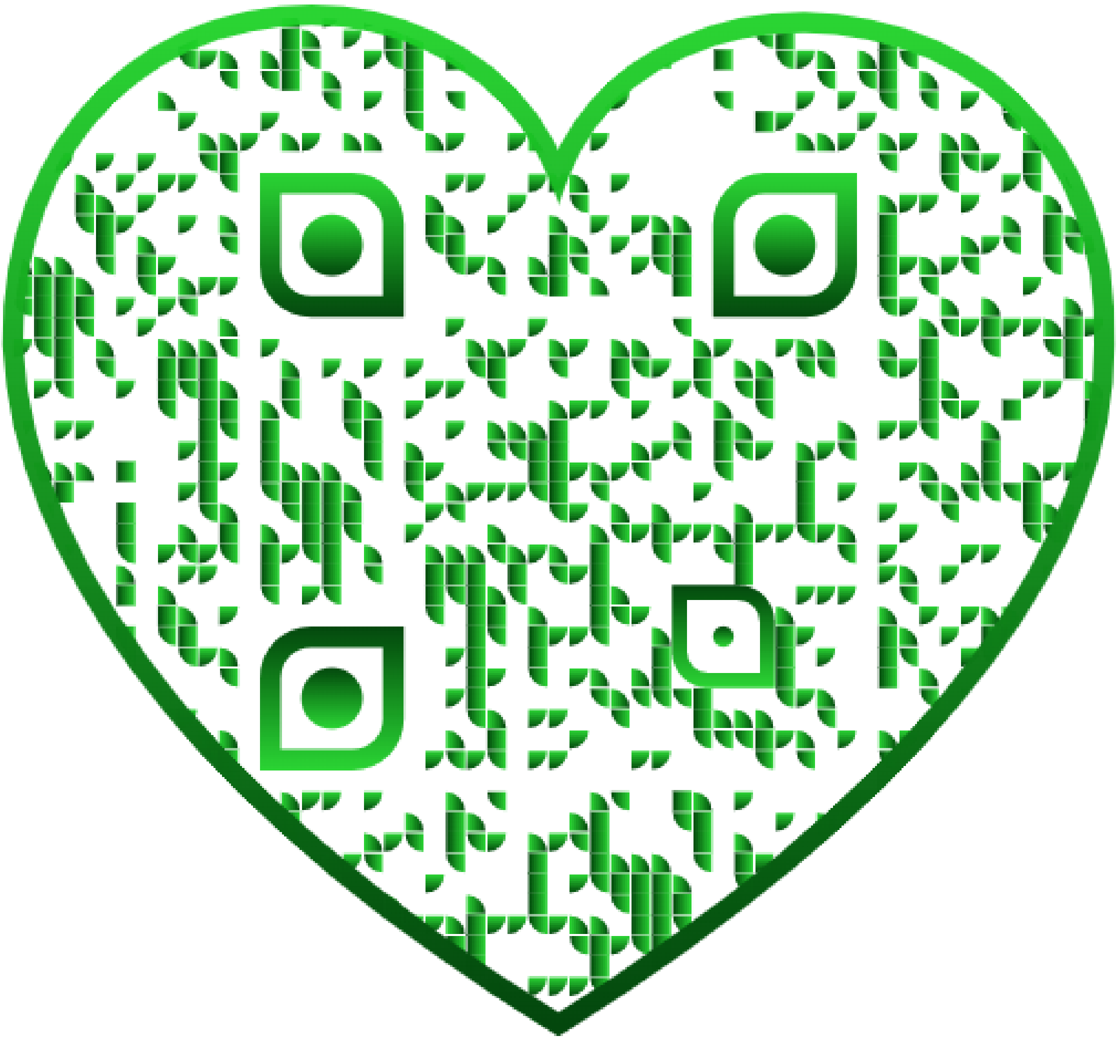
DEEP PURPLE

FUTURE
ISSUE 326

As chosen by

PAUL STANLEY JOE BONAMASSA **TONY IOMMI** IAN ANDERSON **BRIAN MAY**
MIKE McCREADY **STEVE HARRIS** BIFF BYFORD **MICK BOX** LZZY HALE

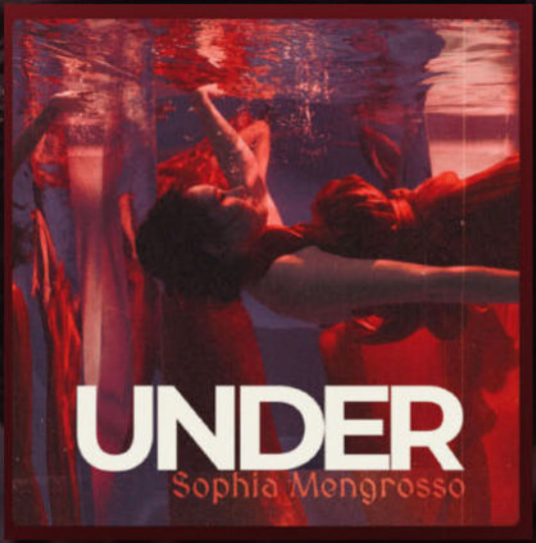
And more!



SOPHIA MENGROSSO

Sophia Mengrosso's haunting, ethereal soundscapes underscore the strength and subtlety of her voice, distinguishing her as a contemporary musical force. Her fusion of classical elegance with the raw energy of rock has engendered a sound that is entirely her own. Her compelling new single 'Under' showcases her talent and versatility, with immersive production quality coupled with candid lyrics and captivating vocal delivery.

Sophia's upcoming album 'Unforgiven' will further explore the emotional depths she has so skillfully crafted. Her live shows and festival appearances are always highly anticipated, offering audiences a chance to fully engage with her unique musical narrative.



sophia_mengrosso

UNDER out now

Listen On Spotify

Contents

MAY 2024 ISSUE 326

22 Deep Purple

"Whether through serendipity or not, call it what you like, we are bloody survivors."

MAIN: GEMA/ICONICPIX

8 The Dirt
It's Record Store Day again; Lemmy statue approved; Foreigner finally nominated for the Hall Of Fame... Welcome back Honeymoon Suite, Dion and Billy Morrison... Say hello to Gen & The Degenerates and Ferris & Sylvester... Say goodbye to Damo Suzuki, Paul Martinez, Bobby Tench...

18 The Stories Behind The Songs
The Waterboys
The key line of their signature song *The Whole Of The Moon* "floated into my mind as if by magic" says its writer Mike Scott.

20 Q&A
Kris Barras
The blues-rocker on getting heavier, top advice from Billy Gibbons, and being a "Poundshop version" of Richie Kotzen.

Cover Feature
22 Deep Purple
How *Machine Head* was a triumph snatched from the flames of disaster. Plus: band members and other rock stars talk about their favourite Purple patches throughout their career.

The Classic Rock Interview
40 Sheryl Crow
The artist, activist, Grammy winner, superstar, cancer survivor and more looks back on the triumphs, hardships, hopes and achievements that mark out her winding road.

48 Scorpions
In 1983 their career was wobbling. But then the next year's *Love At First Sting* album turned them into global superstars.

54 Big Big Train
With their first album following the death of their frontman, they have something he would be have been proud of.

58 Gun
With new album *Hombres* they've hit the bullseye again.

62 Gary Clark Jr.
With his new album he's thrown off the labels and delivered a musically diverse record while still hitting hard with social commentary.

66 The Hot List
We look at some of the essential new tracks you need to hear and the artists to have on your radar. This month they include Mdou Moctar, Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse, The Warning, Joanne Shaw Taylor, Dan Byrne and more...

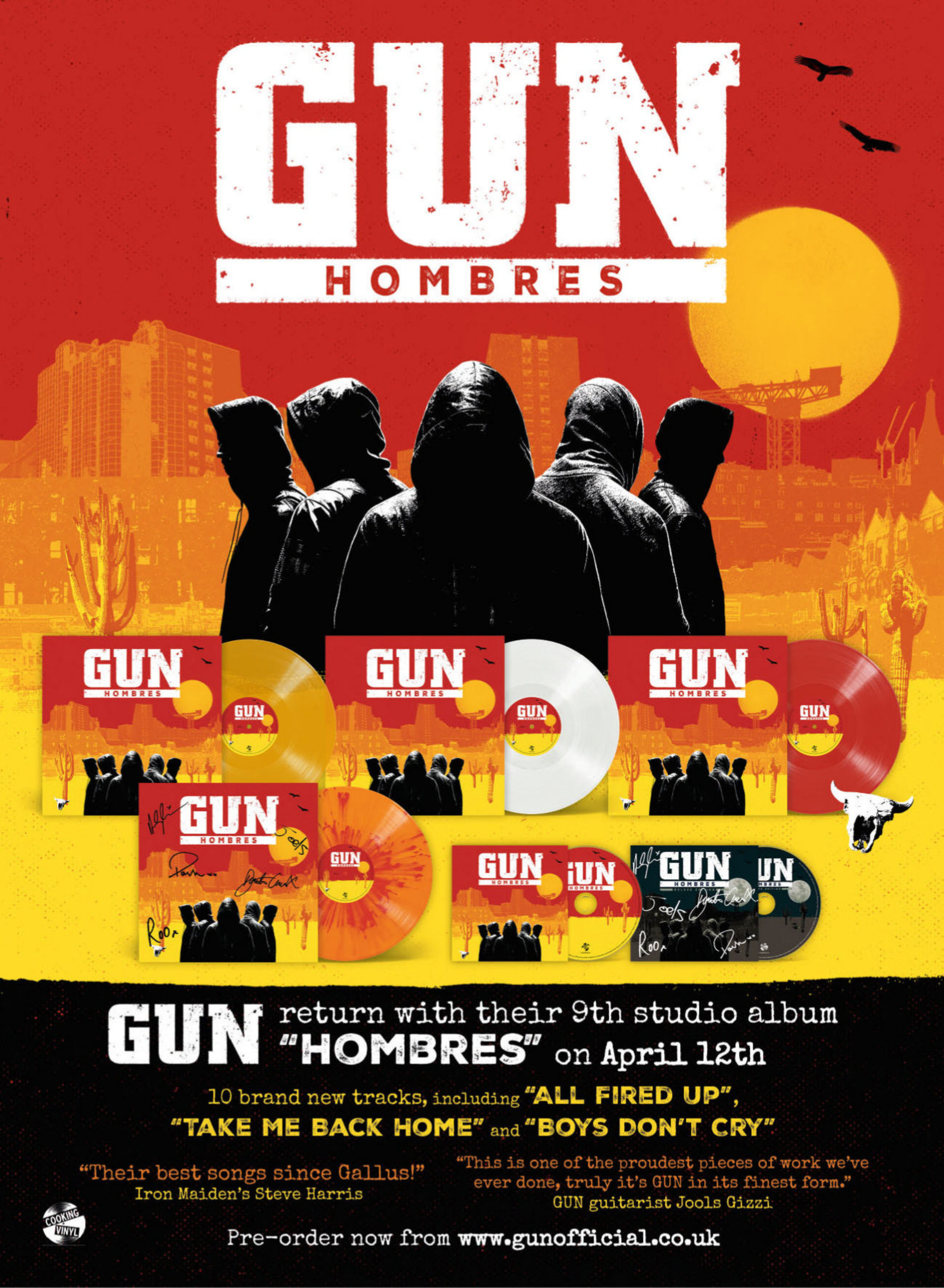
71 Reviews
New albums from Pearl Jam, Gary Clark Jr., Hawkwind, Sheryl Crow, The Black Keys, Gun, Kris Barras, These Wicked Rivers, Kid Kapichi... Reissues from Deep Purple, Bon Jovi, Manic Street Preachers, Alice Cooper, Garbage, Michael Schenker Group, Nico... DVDs, films and books on Phil Manzanera, John Martyn, Little Richard, The Zombies... Live reviews of Feeder, Dirty Honey, Mandy, Indiana...

88 Buyer's Guide
Peter Green
If you're thinking of going Green, read our guide first.

91 Lives
We preview tours by Jethro Tull, The Hives and New Model Army. Plus gig listings – who's playing where and when.

106 The Soundtrack Of My Life
Wolfgang Van Halen
The Mammoth WVH guitarist/singer on albums, artists and songs including AC/DC, Peter Gabriel, dad Eddie and more

SUBSCRIBE AND GET A FREE GIFT! p80


GUN
HOMBRES
GUN return with their 9th studio album "HOMBRES" on April 12th
10 brand new tracks, including "ALL FIRED UP", "TAKE ME BACK HOME" and "BOYS DON'T CRY"
"Their best songs since Gallus!"
Iron Maiden's Steve Harris
"This is one of the proudest pieces of work we've ever done, truly it's GUN in its finest form."
GUN guitarist Jools Gizzi
COOKING VINYL
Pre-order now from www.gunofficial.co.uk

It's a really tough question: which is your favourite Deep Purple track? Over the past couple of years, *Classic Rock* has been putting that question to the great and good of the rock world, including members of Deep Purple themselves, past and present. So, who picked a track "just to annoy" a bandmate "who doesn't like it", and which track is it? Which stone-cold DP classic was "literally done in about two hours of drunkenness"? Hint: it's the same track that Brian May believes features "the best drum break in the world". The answer to all these questions and way more besides can be found from p22.

Elsewhere we talk to the Scorpions about the making of their classic *Love At First Sting* as it celebrates its 40th anniversary (p48); sit down with Sheryl Crow for the Classic Rock Interview (p40); shoot the breeze with Gun (p58); take a trip on the Big Big Train (p54); hang out with Gary Clark Jr. and so much more...

Siân Llewellyn, Editor

PS: If you're a subscriber (and if not, why not? Go to p80 to sort), you now have access to our digital edition (and more than 100 back issues) for free!

THE COVER: DIDI ZILL

SCAN TO GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Subscribe!

Save money, get your issues early and get exclusive subscriber benefits. Visit www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk for our latest subscription offers.

This month's contributors

PHIL DUNK
Ever wonder how the images in *CR* look so good? Meet our image manipulator Phil. He's been a creative retoucher for over 20 years. "Rock music runs in my blood," he says. "My dad has been a lead singer in rock bands for over forty years, and my uncle had success with Bleak House. Some say I was born in the wrong era! Like most, *Smoke On The Water* by Deep Purple was the first song I was taught on the guitar."

DAVE LING
As a teenager, *CR* co-founder Dave discovered Deep Purple via the collection *24 Carat Purple*, before buying his first copy of *Machine Head* on purple vinyl (he later had it signed by Ian Gillan). *Machine Head* changed his life for ever. In this month's cover story, Dave, whose own desert island disc is the album *Stormbringer*, asked dozens of musicians to name their favourite Purple track (p22).

HENRY YATES
Longtime *CR* contributor Henry has written for titles including *The Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *NME*, *Guitarist*, *Total Guitar* and *Metal Hammer*, and interviewed rock stars from Lemmy to Liam Gallagher. For this issue he led Sheryl Crow through her three-decade career (page 40), and was pleased to discover that they share a mutual hatred of AI. See www.yatescreativecopywriting.com and @henryyateswords for more.

CLASSIC ROCK

Editor
Siân Llewellyn
Now playing: Pearl Jam, *Dark Matter*

Art Editor
Darrell Mayhew
Enslaved, *Heimdal (Deluxe Version)*

Deputy Editor
Polly Glass
Troy Redfern, *Invocation*

Production Editor
Paul Henderson
Ferris & Sylvester, *Otherness*

Reviews Editor
Ian Fortnam
Cock Sparrer, *Hand On Heart*

Online Editor
Fraser Lewry
Mdou Moctar, *Funeral for Justice*

News/Lives Editor
Dave Ling
Lionheart, *The Grace Of A Dragonfly*

Contributing writers
John Aizlewood, Merlin Alderslade, Marcel Anders, Stuart Bailie, Geoff Barton, Tim Batcup, Mark Blake, Mark Beaumont, Max Bell, Essi Berelian, Paul Brannigan, Alex Burrows, Pat Carty, Rich Chamberlain, Stephen Dalton, Bill DeMain, Niall Doherty, Lee Dorrian, Mark Ellen, Claudia Elliott, Paul Elliott, Dave Everley, Jerry Ewing, Hugh Fielder, Eleanor Goodman, Gary Graff, Nick Hasted, Rich Hobson, Barney Hoskyns, Jon Hotten, Rob Hughes, Neil Jeffries, Emma Johnston, Damian Jones, Jo Kendall, Hannah May Kilroy, Dom Lawson, Dannii Leivers, Chris Lord, Ken McIntyre, Lee Marlow, Julian Marszalek, Alexander Milas, Paul Moody, Grant Moon, Kris Needs, Paul Rees, Chris Roberts, David Quantick, Will Simpson, Johnny Sharp, David Sinclair, Sleazegrinder, David Stubbs, Everett True, Jaan Uhelszki, Mick Wall, Philip Wilding, Henry Yates

Contributing photographers
Brian Aris, Dick Barnatt, Ami Barwell, Rob Blackham, Adrian Boot, Justin Borucki, Dave Brolan, Alison Clarke, Zach Cordner, Fin Costello, Henry Diltz, Kevin Estrada, James Fortune, Jill Furmanovsky, Herb Greene, Bob Gruen, Michael Halsband, Ross Halfin, Paul Harries, Mick Hutson, Will Ireland, Robert Knight, Marie Korner, Barry Levine, Jim Marshall, John McMurtrie, Gered Mankowitz, David Montgomery, Kevin Nixon, Denis O'Regan, Katja Ogrin, Barry Plummer, Ron Pownall, Neal Preston, Michael Putland, Mick Rock, James Sharrock, Pennie Smith, Stephen Stickler, Leigh A van der Byl, Chris Walter, Mark Weiss, Barrie Wentzell, Baron Wolman, Michael Zagaris, Neil Zlozower

All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

ABC January-December 2021: 35,211

Thanks this issue to: Steve Mitchell (typography), Phil Dunk (image manipulation), Steve Newman (layouts)

Cover photo: Didi Zill

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor **Siân Llewellyn**
Art Editor **Darrell Mayhew**
Deputy Editor **Polly Glass**
Production Editor **Paul Henderson**
Reviews Editor **Ian Fortnam**
News/Lives Editor **Dave Ling**
Online Editor **Fraser Lewry**
Content Director (Music) **Scott Rowley**
Head Of Design (Music) **Brad Merrett**

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Sales Director (Music Portfolio) **Lara Jaggon**
lara.jaggon@futurenet.com
Account Director **Kyle Phillips**
kyle.phillips@futurenet.com
Account Director **Steven Pyatt**
steven.pyatt@futurenet.com
Account Manager **Lawrence Cooke**
lawrence.cooke@futurenet.com

International licensing and syndication *Classic Rock* is available for licensing and syndication. To find out more contact us at licensing@futurenet.com or view our available content at www.futurecontenthub.com.
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**

Digital
Editor In Chief, Louder **Briony Edwards**
Executive Editor, Louder **Merlin Aldersdale**
Staff Writer, Louder **Lizzie Capewell**

Subscriptions
New orders: www.magazinesdirect.com / 0330 333 1113 / email help@magazinesdirect.com
Renewals: www.mymagazine.co.uk / customer service: 0330 333 4333 / email queries: help@mymagazine.co.uk
Acquisitions Director **Sharon Todd**

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Senior Ad Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Keely Miller**

Management
Managing Director, Music **Stuart Williams**

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE APRIL 26

Classic Rock, Future, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR, UK
classicrockmagazine.com
Subscription queries: 0330 333 1113 (from the UK) or +44 330 333 1113 (from overseas) or help@magazinesdirect.com

How to order and access back issues: if an active subscriber, you have digital entitlement to access back issues through your IOS or android device/s. Your digital magazine entitlement is available at no additional cost and no further action is required. PocketMags library may not have access to the full archive of digital back issues. You will only be able to access the digital back issues as long as you are an active subscriber. To purchase single back issues (print format only) visit: magazinesdirect.com (click on 'Single Issues' tab) Or email: help@magazinesdirect.com
For further help call: +44(0)330 333 1113 Lines are open Mon- Fri 8.30am-7pm and Sat 10am-3pm UK time.

Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future.
Distributed by Marketforce UK, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6QA.
For enquiries please email mfcommunications@futurenet.com **ISSN** 1464783

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture.
The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.

All contents © 2024 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

If you submit material to us, you warrant that you own the material and/or have the necessary rights/permissions to supply the material and you automatically grant Future and its licensees a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in any/all issues and/or editions of publications, in any format published worldwide and on associated websites, social media channels and associated products. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents, subcontractors or licensees shall be liable for loss or damage. We assume all unsolicited material is for publication unless otherwise stated, and reserve the right to edit, amend, adapt all submissions.

FUTURE Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Officer **Jon Steinberg**
Non-Executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer **Penny Ladkin-Brand**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

ipso. Regulated

Widely Recycled

50TH ANNIVERSARY

JOURNEY

VERY SPECIAL GUEST

Cheap Trick
Cheap Trick

FREEDOM TOUR • UNITED KINGDOM 2024

WED	30	OCT	CARDIFF UTILITA ARENA
THU	31	OCT	NOTTINGHAM MOTORPOINT ARENA
SAT	02	NOV	GLASGOW OVO HYDRO
FRI	08	NOV	MANCHESTER AO ARENA
SAT	09	NOV	LEEDS FIRST DIRECT ARENA
MON	11	NOV	LIVERPOOL M&S BANK ARENA
WED	13	NOV	BIRMINGHAM UTILITA ARENA
SAT	16	NOV	NEWCASTLE UTILITA ARENA
SUN	17	NOV	LONDON THE O2

AEGPRESENTS.CO.UK / AXS.COM / TICKETMASTER.CO.UK / SEETICKETS.COM

AEG PRESENTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH CAA

"AN ALBUM ON VINYL IS A BEAUTIFUL THING"

Kate Bush signs up to celebrate Record Store Day 2024.

Kate Bush says it was a "huge honour and a great privilege" to be invited to become the latest ambassador for Record Store Day. This year's annual celebration of independent record stores, which began in the United States in 2007 and was initiated in the UK 12 months later, takes place on Saturday, April 20.

Bush, who has been making albums since her debut *The Kick Inside* in 1978, follows Sir Elton John, Noel Gallagher, Taylor Swift and the band The 1975 in the role. She is thrilled by the continued resurgence of vinyl as a format.

"The music industry had decided to leave vinyl far behind, but it would seem that not everyone agrees! I love that!" she says. "I know there are many, many artists who are just as excited to see the audience turning the tide. In the same way that some people like to read a book on Kindle but also want to have a book as a physical object, a lot of people like vinyl and streaming. Both have different appeals."

Bush believes that in addition to being a tactile experience and visually appealing, physical media brings other advantages.

"The added bonus of vinyl is that it encourages people to listen to albums," she points out. "It's an art form that I've always thought can be treasured in a unique way. An album on vinyl is a beautiful thing, given a strong identity by its large-scale artwork. There's a much more personal connection with the artist and their work."

Naturally, Bush has her own Record Store Day release, and a special 10" edition of *Eat The Music* arrives exclusively in independent record shops on April 20. The single was meant to have appeared on her 1993 album *Red Shoes* but was replaced by *Rubberband Girl*.

With vinyl sales hitting a 33-year high in the UK, increasing for the sixteenth year in a row (according to data from the British Phonographic Industry), Bush is optimistic that the thrill of going into a shop and buying a vinyl album isn't going away any time soon.

"Each year, Record Store Day gathers more attention, more momentum, attracting more people who cram into indie record stores all over the world to see what's up," she says. "This year I hope you have a fantastic time at this very important event, and that you get to celebrate music that's been specially released for you."

A full list of the 260 shops participating in this year's Record Store Day, and also of releases, can be found at recordstoreday.co.uk. We've printed a small selection of what's available domestically in 2024, along with details of quantities and formats where available. **DL**

RECORD STORE DAY UK

Here's a far from complete mini-checklist.

America
Live At Hollywood Bowl 1975 – unreleased album, double LP, coloured vinyl.

Apocalyptica
Worlds Collide – numbered double LP, marbled vinyl.

Barclay James Harvest
Barclay James Harvest And Other Short Stories – first vinyl reissue in 30 years.

Be-Bop Deluxe
Futurama (Stephen Tayler mix) – blue vinyl.

Captain Beefheart & His Magic Band
The Spotlight Kid (Deluxe Edition) – 7,000 copies, double-LP on 140g milky clear vinyl.

Big Country
Why The Long Face – turquoise vinyl.

Black Sabbath
Paranoid – splatter vinyl.

David Bowie
Waiting In The Sky (Before The Starman Came To Earth) – 18,000 copies, 180g black vinyl.

Eric Carr
Unfinished Business (Deluxe Edition) – double LP.

The Cure
The Top (40th Anniversary) – picture disc.

Def Leppard
Live At Leadmill – double LP, silver vinyl.

The Doors
Live At Konserthuset, Stockholm September 20, 1968 – 11,300 numbered copies, 3LP on 140g translucent light blue vinyl. 13,100 copies, 2CD.

Faces
The BBC Session Recordings – 8,500 copies, double LP on 140g clear vinyl.

Bryan Ferry
The Right Stuff – 12" EP, blue vinyl.

Fleetwood Mac
Rumours – 18,000 copies, picture disc.

The Flying Burrito Brothers
Bluegrass Special: Live In Amsterdam 1972 – double LP.

Foghat
Permission To Jam: Live In New Orleans 1973 – 6,000 copies, double LP on 140g black vinyl.

Garbage
Lie To Me – lime green vinyl.

Lowell George
Thanks, I'll Eat It Here (Deluxe Edition) – 5,500 copies, double LP on 140g black vinyl.

Golden Earring
The Cut Sessions – double LP on crystal-coloured vinyl.

Grateful Dead
Nightfall Of Diamonds – 10,000 copies, 4LP on 180g black vinyl + etching.

Dave Grohl, Scott Ian and Charlie Benante
The Regulator – single-sided 7" with etched B-side.

Hawkwind
Live Seventy-Nine – clear vinyl.

Ian Hunter
Defiance Part 2: Fiction – double LP.

Elton John
Caribou – double album, 180g sky blue vinyl.

Tom Jones
It's Not Unusual – 7" single, amber vinyl.

Leaf Hound
Growers Of Mushroom – cloudy yellow vinyl.

John Lennon
Mind Games – 12" four-track EP, luminous vinyl.

Linda Ronstadt
The Asylum Albums (1973 – 1977) – 5,000 copies, 4LP on 140g black vinyl.

Morrissey & Siouxsie
Interlude – 9,500 copies, 12" on gold vinyl.

Mötley Crüe
Supersonic And Demon Relics – splatter vinyl.

Motörhead
Remorse? No! – double LP, silver vinyl.

Mr. Big
Lean Into It Live, The Big Finish – black and red splatter 180g vinyl.

Mudhoney
Suck You Dry: The Reprise Years – 5,000 copies, 5LP on 140g multi-colour vinyl.

Willie Nelson
Phases And Stages – 7,500 copies, double LP on 140g black vinyl.

The Alan Parsons Project
Work In Progress – 4,200 copies on orange vinyl.

Queen
Cool Cat – 7" vinyl single, pink.

Ramones
The 1975 Sire Demos – 13,500 copies, 140g ultra-clear w/black splatter vinyl.

The Replacements
Not Ready For Prime Time: Live At The Cabaret Metro, Chicago, IL, January 11, 1986 – 8,500 copies, double LP on 140g black vinyl.

The Rolling Stones
The Rolling Stones – 180gm blue/black swirl vinyl..

The Rolling Stones
Live At Racket – white vinyl.

Todd Rundgren
Todd – 6,000 copies, double LP on orange and green vinyl.

Michael Schenker Group
MSG (Expanded) – double LP, coloured vinyl.

The Sisters Of Mercy
Body And Soul/Walk Away – 8,000 copies, 140g blue galaxy vinyl.

Talking Heads
Live At WCOZ 77 – 13,500 copies, 140g black vinyl.

Thin Lizzy
Live At Hammersmith 16-11-76 – double LP, 180gm with gatefold sleeve.

UFO
Lights Out In Tokyo (Live) – double LP, translucent green.

Roger Waters
The Dark Side Of The Moon (Redux) – picture disc.

The Who
The Story Of The Who – double LP, pink and green vinyl.

Steven Wilson
Sonic Divergence – very limited edition, single LP, nine-track release.

The Yardbirds
Five Live Yardbirds – LP.

Yes
Yale Bowl '71 – 8,000 copies, 140g black vinyl.

Neil Young & Crazy Horse
*F**kin' Up* – clear vinyl.

Frank Zappa
Zappa For President – double LP, red and blue splatter on white vinyl.

This month The Dirt was compiled by Lee Dorrian, Dave Everley, Jerry Ewing, Rob Hughes, Jo Kendall, Polly Glass, Fraser Lewry, Dave Ling

RIP

Thank you...
and good night.

Ian Aimy

May 15, 1944 – February 15, 2024

Better known as Tich from the 1960s British Invasion band Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick And Tich, with that band Ian Aimy topped the UK singles chart with *The Legend Of Xanadu*, one of two by the band that sold more than a million copies. The guitarist's passing at the age of 79 leaves Beaky (ak John Dymond) as the group's sole surviving original member, Dave Dee having died in 2009, Dozy in 2015, and Mick in 1964. Tich, who retired from the band in 2014, died following a short illness.

John Rowe

April 13, 1942 – February 22, 2024

The pianist with The Quarrymen, Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison's pre-Beatles group, has died aged 81. Sometimes known as Duff, John Rowe joined The Quarrymen in February 1958 and stayed with them for two years, and played on their McCartney/ Harrison-penned single *In Spite of All The Danger*. He re-formed The Quarrymen (minus John, Paul, George and drummer Colin Hanton) in 1994 and they released their debut album *Open For Engagements*. He continued to perform with them until 2017. Cause of death is unknown.

Greg 'Fritz' Hinz

January 23, 1956-February 16, 2024

The drummer with Canadian hard rockers Helix has lost his battle with cancer. He was 68. Greg 'Fritz' Hinz joined the Ontario-based group in 1982 and remained in the line-up until 1996. He returned 13 years later for a second stint that lasted until his passing. "Fritz was like a brother to myself, Brent [Doerner, former guitarist] and many other people who worked for the band," said frontman Brian Vollmer. "He wanted his privacy through [his illness]. He was a proud guy and tough as fuck."

Paul Brett

June 20, 1947 – January 31, 2024

Rated among the finest 12-string acoustic guitarists in the world, Paul Brett carved out an impressive CV. Born in London, and latterly a resident of Pwllheli, Wales, he has played or recorded with The Strawbs, the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown, Roy Harper, Al Stewart and Lonnie Donegan, as well as making records of his own and pursuing a career as a music writer, having contributed to *Melody Maker, NME* and *International Musician*. Brett was 76 years old and died of a heart attack.

Damo Suzuki

January 16, 1950 – February 9, 2024

The celebrated former vocalist of pioneering Krautrock group Can has died at the age of 74. Cause of death has not been announced, although in 2014 he was diagnosed with colon cancer.

Japan-born Suzuki was famously discovered busking in Munich in 1970 by Holger Czukay and Jakki Liebezeit of Can. They subsequently invited him to replace the recently departed Malcolm Mooney. Suzuki remained with Can until 1973, through arguably the band's most fruitful period, appearing on their albums *Soundtracks, Tago Mago, Ege Bamyasi* and *Future Days*, on which he developed his often improvised vocal style.

After quitting Can, Suzuki also left the music business. He returned to music in 1983 with the Damo Suzuki Network and toured prolifically. His most recent album, *Arkaoda*, was released in 2022. He was also a frequent collaborator with other musicians, including Omar Rodriguez-Lopez from The Mars Volta, and was immortalised by UK post-punks The Fall on their 1985 album *This Nation's Saving Grace*, with the song *I Am Damo Suzuki*.

A statement from Can's record label Spoon said: "Damo's boundless creative energy has touched so many over the whole world, not just with Can, but also with his all-continents-spanning Network Tour. His kind soul and cheeky smile will be forever missed." **JE**

Bobby Tench

September 21, 1944 – February 2024

Vocalist, guitarist, sideman, songwriter and arranger Bobby Tench is best remembered for being a member of the Jeff Beck Group, Humble Pie, Streetwalkers and Van Morrison's band, and also for his work with Freddie King, Ginger Baker, Eric Burdon, Topper Headon and Linda Lewis, and the bands Beck Bogert & Appice, Boxer and Widowmaker, among others. Tench was 79 years old. Cause of death has not yet been announced.

Born in London in 1944, Tench formed Gass in 1965, and their 1970 album *Juju* featured a cameo from Peter Green. The following May Tench joined the Jeff Beck Group, and sang on their albums *Rough And Ready* and *Jeff Beck Group*. Along with other Beck alumni he formed the rock-meets-soul outfit Hummingbird, before joining Streetwalkers. He had two stints in Humble Pie, from 1980-81 and 2001-02.

Although Tench never quite attained the level of appreciation that he deserved, his immense talent was recognised by serious music fans and by peers and fellow musicians. Joe Bonamassa was influenced as a vocalist by Tench. "Rest in peace, Bobby," Bonamassa wrote on social media, where he also shared a clip of Tench performing *I Gotta Have A Song* with the Jeff Beck Group, and described him as "one of the greatest singers to ever step behind the mic". **DL**

Brit Turner

February 14, 1967 – March 3, 2024

The drummer with Georgia-based southern rockers Blackberry Smoke has died at 57. Brit Turner had battled glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer, since late 2022. A statement from the band said: "If you had the privilege of knowing Brit on any level, you know he was the most caring, empathetic, driven and endearing person one could ever hope to meet. Brit was the compass that instituted the ideology that will continue to guide this band."

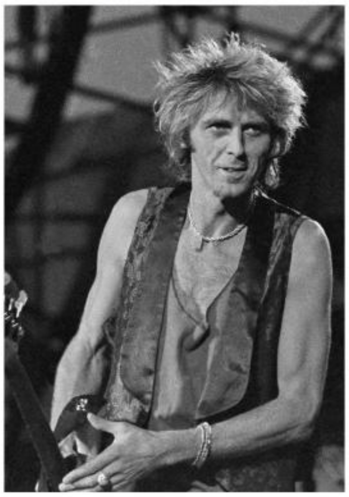
Before Blackberry Smoke, Turner and his brother Richard, the group's bassist, were members of the thrash metal band Nihilist. The pair then hooked up with Charlie Starr in Buffalo Nickel, whose one album, *Longplay 33⅓*, was released in 2000. The trio then formed Blackberry Smoke with guitarist Paul Jackson. Brit Turner appeared on all of the group's subsequent albums, the most recent of which was this year's *Be Right Here*, made with his illness looming large.

"It gave the recording process, and then everything after, sort of… I say a sense of urgency, but it didn't put us in a hurry," Starr told *Classic Rock* last month. "It just made all that time really precious. Everybody took a long hard look at it, like: 'We get to do this, we get to make music and make records and work with Dave Cobb [producer] and work together.' And it just made it seem really special." **FL**

DAMO SUZUKI: SYLVIA LEBRE/DALLE/ICONICPIX; BOBBY TENCH: MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY; BRIT TURNER: ANDY SAPP

Paul Martinez

October 6, 1947 – February 9, 2024



A bassist, songwriter and session musician of distinction, during his lifetime Paul Martinez performed with an impressive selection of artists, most notably working on and touring Robert Plant's first three solo albums *Pictures At Eleven*, *The Principle Of Moments* and *Shaken 'N' Stirred*, released between 1982 and '85. He co-wrote several songs with Plant, including the worldwide hit *Big Log*. Martinez was also a part of Plant's side project the Crawling King Snakes. In 1985, he played with Led Zeppelin for their 20-minute set at Live Aid in Philadelphia, taking over on bass from John Paul Jones when Jonesy moved over to keyboards for *Stairway To Heaven*.

Prior to his stint with Plant, Leicester-born Martinez had worked with Stan Webb's Chicken Shack, The Adverts, John Otway, Cat Stevens, Renaissance and Stretch. In 1977 he played bass on the now iconic *Malice In Wonderland* album by Paice Ashton And Lord. He also worked with Dave Edmunds, Peter Gabriel, Maggie Bell and George Harrison, among many others, and was regularly in demand for sessions at Rockfield Studios. Martinez was also rumoured to have been in the frame to take over from Bill Wyman when Bill walked away from the Rolling Stones in 1993.

Martinez was 76, and had been diagnosed with stomach cancer. **DL**

Steve Wright

August 26, 1954 – February 12, 2024

A nation mourned following news of the passing of DJ and broadcaster Steve Wright – also recognised by the name of his long-running BBC radio show *Steve Wright In The Afternoon*. The 69-year-old died following an incident at his home. Police said his death was "unexpected" but was not being treated as suspicious.

Born in Greenwich, South London, Wright joined the BBC in the early 70s as a clerk, and left in 1976 for a broadcasting opportunity at Thames Valley Radio. His big break came three years later when he was handed a nightly show on Radio Luxembourg. He presented *Steve Wright In The Afternoon* for 12 years on Radio 1, before moving to Radio 2, where it ran for 23 years. He was also a regular presenter on *Top Of The Pops*.

Wright's zany sense of humour was hard to dislike, as were his comedic sketches and 'guest characters', including Mr Angry, and the anonymous Motorcycle Courier who would scream: "Sign 'ere please!"

Robert Plant wrote on X: "[This is] a sad day for UK radio. The spirit and fun we enjoyed from the great Steve Wright, he will be greatly missed". Former Motörhead guitarist Phil Campbell said: "Listening to Steve Wright helped me get through my days when I drove vans for a living. A radio pioneer for sure. RIP." **DL**

Dave Myers

September 8, 1957 – February 28, 2024

One half of the much-loved Hairy Bikers, Dave Myers first found fame alongside his partner Si King as a TV chef way back in 2004. He had been diagnosed with cancer two years ago. Myers was 66 years old.

Born and raised in Barrow-in-Furness, Myers was a Northerner and proud of the fact. He and sidekick King met in the 90s. Together they became known for travelling around the world on motorbikes, sampling and cooking food from different regions. The Hairy Bikers published more than 30 recipe books, selling in excess of six million copies. Myers's celebrity status increased when he appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2013.

Myers and King were huge fans of rock music, and the pair hosted *The Hairy Rock Show* on Planet Rock Radio from 2015 to 2020. Myers's favourite band was the Scorpions, and he once explained on air that the group's 1979 album *Lovedrive* was the soundtrack to his marriage.

A heartbroken Si King said: "My best friend is on a journey that, for now, I can't follow. I will miss Dave every day, also the bond of friendship we shared over half a lifetime."

Members of Thunder said: "It was abundantly clear to all who met him that Dave was a warm, funny and genuine man. The world is a much poorer place now he's no longer in it." **DL**

PAUL MARTINEZ: AMY SANCETTA/ALAMY; STEVE WRIGHT: EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY; DAVE MYERS: KEN MCKAY/ITV/SHUTTERSTOCK

Toby Keith

July 8, 1961 – February 5, 2024

Multi-talented country music singer, musician, songwriter, record producer and actor Toby Keith has lost a two-year battle with stomach cancer. He was 62. Over a career of more than 30 years, the Oklahoma native sold tens of millions of records. Sammy Hagar described Keith's passing as "a huge loss to the industry and the USA", adding candidly: "While I know a lot of people, I don't have many friends. I just lost one. Love and prayers to Toby's family."

Keith Martin

April 2, 1934 – February 21, 2024

It's a sad farewell to the Radio Caroline DJ and pioneer of pirate broadcasting Keith Martin. Born in Sandwich, Kent, Martin joined the illegal offshore station in 1964, even though he suffered from sea sickness. Years later he admitted that at his first meeting with John Thompson, the station boss suspected him of being an undercover agent for the GPO, the body then in charge of UK wireless broadcasting. Martin was 89 years old when he died of cancer.

Mojo Nixon

August 2, 1957 – February 7, 2024

Musician, actor and radio host Mojo Nixon has died after suffering a cardiac arrest aboard the Outlaw Country Cruise. Born Neill Kirby McMillan Jr 66 years ago in North Carolina, his music twinned political punk with country melody. "How you live is how you should die," said a family statement sent to *Rolling Stone* magazine. "Mojo Nixon was full-tilt, wide-open rock hard, root hog, corner on two wheels + on fire…"

Hans Sahlén

Died February 6, 2024

The Canadian melodic hard rock band Boulevard (sometimes referred to as Blvd) have paid tribute to their early bassist after he passed "peacefully". Nicknamed 'The Thumb', Hans Sahlen was a co-founder of the Calgary-based five-piece, but left before they recorded their self-titled debut in 1988. "Hans was a thoughtful and kind soul, now gone to play with that great band in the sky," said a band statement. "See you on the other side, our friend."

Vitalij Kuprij

July 7, 1974 – February 20, 2024

Ukrainian-American multi-instrumentalist Vitalij Kuprij was a classically trained virtuoso from Volodarka in Kiev who played with the progressive metal bands Artension and Ring Of Fire and toured with Trans-Siberian Orchestra. TSO released a statement that said Kuprij was "a world-renowned classical pianist and composer, accomplished chess player, an avid fisherman, and simply a fun-loving soul". Kuprij was 49 years old. Cause of death has not been given.

Alex Van Halen Breaks Silence

New book will "set the record straight" on Eddie.

Former Van Halen drummer Alex Van Halen is to share the details of his relationship with late younger brother and long-time bandmate Edward in a revealing new book titled *Brothers*. Described by publishers HarperCollins as an "intimate and open account, nothing like any rock memoir you've ever read", it's available on October 22.

Alex Van Halen promises that the book, written with writer Ariel Levy, will "set the record straight on Edward's life and death". A press release quotes the 70-year-old drummer as saying: "We shared the experience of coming to this country and figuring out how to fit in. We shared a record player, an 800-square-foot house, a mom and dad, and a work ethic."

Since Edward's passing and the subsequent, inevitable break-up of Van Halen in 2020, the drummer has maintained a low profile. "Alex never played with anybody ever except his brother," former VH singer Sammy Hagar said last November. **DL**

Alex Van Halen's book is an "intimate and open account".

Foreigner's Mick Jones Confirms Parkinson's

But guitarist is still "very much involved" with the band.

Mick Jones of Foreigner has revealed that he is suffering from Parkinson's disease. "Fans will have become very aware that for some time now I have not been performing on stage with the band," said the 79-year-old guitarist, songwriter and producer in a statement. "Several years ago, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. I want everyone to know that I am doing alright. However, I've always liked to be at my best when performing on stage, and sadly, at present I find that a bit difficult. I'm still very much involved in the background with Foreigner and remain a presence. Parkinson's is a daily struggle. The important thing is to persevere and remind myself of the wonderful career I've had in music."

On February 10, Foreigner were announced as one of the nominees for this year's Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame inductions, along with Ozzy Osbourne, Peter Frampton, Jane's Addiction, Oasis and Lenny Kravitz, among others. **DL**

NEWS

Former **Beatles** Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr are to be the subjects of four separate biopic feature films directed by Oscar-winning English director Sam Mendes. Financed by Sony Pictures Entertainment, they are expected to be released in 2027.

Fraudsters posing as **Ritchie Blackmore** have conned a pensioner out of her life savings. Debbie Horwood, 80, from Hampshire, who knew Blackmore in her youth, fell for an online scam and was persuaded to part with £115,000. The real Blackmore later commented: "I hope they catch the thief and everything works out fine."

Winger have announced a farewell UK show at Islington Assembly Hall in London on June 7. Support comes from Joe Hoekstra & Brandon Gibbs.

Little Feat are to release their first new studio album in 12 years. *Sam's Place*, available via their own label Hot Tomato Productions on May 17, is the band's first blues album and features titular conga player Sam Clayton on lead vocals.

The long-awaited fifth album from **Black Country Communion** (pictured), the band featuring Glenn Hughes, Joe Bonamassa, Jason Bonham and Derek Sherinian, is released on June 14. Produced by Kevin Shirley, *V* is the first new music from the quartet in seven years.

WELCOME BACK

Billy Morrison

Taking time out from playing with big names, he's made an album of his own, with Ozzy and more guesting.

Billy Morrison is an ex-pat Brit living the American Dream. After leaving both his band, London industrial-punks Stimulator, and the UK at the end of the 1990s and heading to Los Angeles, he's become a self-made success story, playing with The Cult, Ozzy Osbourne and Billy Idol and all-star covers band Royal Machines (formerly Camp Freddy). His third solo album, *The Morrison Project*, mashes up metal, punk, EDM and hip-hop, and features guest vocals from Corey Taylor, rapper DMC, Ministry's Al Jourgensen, Linda Perry and, on *Crack Cocaine*, Ozzy Osbourne.

> "I wouldn't be the person I am without the struggle I had."

You've hit the contact book hard for this album. That's an impressive line-up of guests.

I didn't even know I was making an album. I was just making music during covid for no reason. I ended up with probably about thirty songs. Most of them were shit, but there some great little ideas. The whole contact book thing happened just because I could hear shit in my head that I couldn't sing: "Corey Taylor would kill this song."

How does one go about persuading Ozzy Osbourne to sing a track called *Crack Cocaine*?

You don't persuade Ozzy to do anything. I've had a thirty-year friendship with him, and he's been there for me more times than anyone else in my entire life. I never say: "Let's write a song." He was the one who said it. We wrote it in a day. Typical Ozzy, he's sitting there writing and he looks up and goes: [sings chorus] '*Like crack cocaine…*' We went: "And that's the fucking song!"

How did you get to know Ozzy in the first place?

Decades ago, I was invited by a mutual friend to a Christmas party at Ozzy and Sharon's house. I get severe social anxiety, so I walked into this kitchen just to breathe. And Ozzy was doing exactly the same thing. We ended up talking about Cadbury's chocolate and the Sex Pistols. Thirty years later here we are.

You had your own struggles with hard drugs when you were young. What would you say to that kid now?

It's difficult, because I wouldn't be the person I am without the struggle I had. I didn't do what most musicians do and get a couple of platinum albums, earn some money and get a drug habit. I started when I was fourteen, and didn't do a thing in the music industry until I was twenty-nine. But I would advise people that there are easier ways of achieving creative fulfilment than shooting smack in your neck all day long.

You've got a very successful parallel career as an artist. What do you get out of that?

Ozzy draws every day. He was driving me fucking crazy: "You should paint." I said: "Ozzy, I can't even draw a stick figure." But I bought a tiny canvas to shut him up, and I painted a skull. And the experience was so cathartic. It was like learning *Anarchy In The UK* for the first time. I've painted every day for the last ten years. Now I sell my paintings. But I've worked at it.

What are your plans with this album?

Once it's released, I'm done with it. I made it because I like making music, that's all. Someone asked me about my 'solo career'. I'm like: "There is no solo career." That's not what this is about. **DE**

The Morrison Project is released on April 19 via TLG/Virgin.

ALEX VAN HALEN: JASON LAVERIS/GETTY; BILLY MORRISON: JANE STUART/PRESS; BLACK COUNTRY COMMUNION: ROB BONDURANT/PRESS

"Alabama Shakes, Brittany Howard and the production style have been huge influences on us."

★ HIGH HOPES

Ferris & Sylvester

Sublime psychedelic soul meets "Johnny Cash and June Carter, with balls".

Considering they have a young, excitable son, Lucky, married duo Issy Ferris and Archie Sylvester are bright-eyed for our morning chat, brimming with cheer when asked about their success at the UK Americana Awards, where they were nominated in three categories, and won Best Album for their 2022 debut *Superhuman*.

They're also excited about their new album *Otherness*. Comprising 14 tracks of what Ferris terms "folk-blues rock'n'roll", it's the result of "years of writing what's best for the song, and also what holds an audience's attention when they might be chatting".

The pair met in 2016 through playing at respective live music nights at the (sadly now defunct) Spiritual Bar in north London. London-based Sylvester was rocking out at the blues night, while Midlands-born Ferris played the midweek folk spot. Pairing up romantically and musically has led to a stunning line in Led Zep-ish guitar whoopee tempered by elements of Joni Mitchell and Laura Marling.

They caught the ear of Robert Plant, who they played with in 2018. Among other supporters including 'Whispering' Bob Harris and Joe Bonamassa, a more left-field champion from early on has been Martin Glover, aka Youth, Killing Joke bassist-turned-producer and label owner/publisher.

"I was invited to play some songs to him," says Sylvester. "I was very nervous, and he told me they were terrible [laughs]. But he sent me away with constructive criticism.

"Then Issy and I met and started to write together," Sylvester continues. "I told Youth: 'It's like Johnny Cash and June Carter, with balls.' When he heard what we'd done, he loved it. He signed us and recorded our first EP, *The Yellow Line*."

The duo now have their own label, Archtop, and have relocated from London to live in Wiltshire, where *Otherness* was rehearsed (at Peter Gabriel's Real World studios) and recorded (at home).

"When we started writing, we realised that the songs were about being outsiders, being 'othered'," Ferris says. "But the title track is a love song – having 'otherness' with another human."

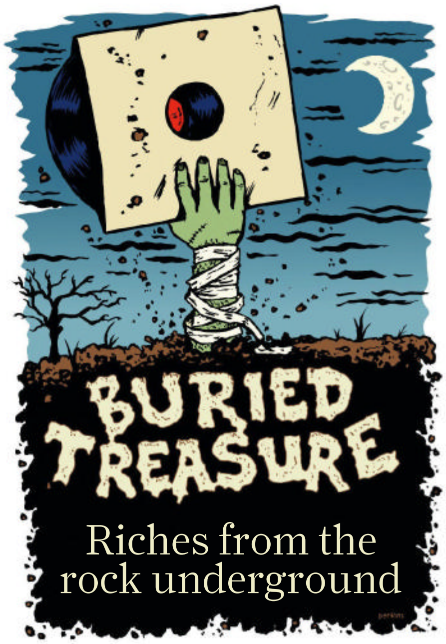
As new parents, the track *Mother* is significant. Lucky was born two months prematurely while the couple were on a US tour, and Ferris says the experience was "scary and life-changing". The track is a sublime slice of psychedelic soul with sweeping string touches.

"It's about a child dreaming of a better life; looking through other families' windows, watching other kids in safe, happy homes," Ferris says of *Mother*. "We realised this was also about us, after the last eighteen months. We'd been treading a difficult path and we needed to belong again. Back at home with Lucky we're getting there." **JK**

Otherness is out on now via Archtop Records.

FOR FANS OF...

"It was nominated for awards in rock, R&B and alternative genres and it's got across-the-board fantastic songs," the duo say of Alabama Shakes' album *Sound & Color*, the soul and eclecticism of which can be heard all over F&S's music. "The band, Brittany Howard and the production style have been huge influences for us."



FIVE DAY RAIN

Five Day Rain, acetate-only album, 1970. £4,000.

Five Day Rain were a short-lived psychedelic-tinged progressive-pop/ rock band, sadly destined for failure. But they left behind an excellent, commercially unreleased album, which featured more than several very well thought-out songs. They were formed from the ashes of Essex based power trio Iron Prophet, and expanded to a four-piece.

It's thought that only 20 acetate copies of the initial album were cut as promo items, making it a holy-grail artefact for prog and psych collectors. Recorded in the summer of 1970, it captures the spirit of the time, bringing to mind other keyboard-driven bands such as Brian Auger & The Trinity and Netherlands legends Earth & Fire.

Beginning with a decent rendition of Dylan's *Too Much Of Nothing*, it's with *Leave It At That* where things start cooking: heavy guitar, bass and organ stabs sit beneath layered vocal harmonies. The simplicity of the chorus has a deadpan charm: '*Watch the sun rising – and leave it at that.*' *Good Year* features Mellotron and excellent vocal arrangements. *Marie's A Woman* has 1970 written all over it. It's an organ-and-guitar-based pop-rocker that could have been a hit. *Rough Cut Marmalade* is an epic instrumental proto-prog acid jam, showcasing their musical talent. Guitarist Rick Sharpe trades tasteful, creative licks and solos with Graham Maitland's keyboard wizardry over the solid rhythm section of bassist Clive Burgess and drummer Kim Haworth.

'The album is a holy-grail artefact for prog and psych collectors.'

Unfortunately, no record deals came their way, and Five Day Rain were over by the end of 1970. **LD**

NEWS

Phil Ehart has stepped away from live performance with **Kansas** as he recovers from a major heart attack. An original member of the band, Ehart is also their manager. Drum tech Eric Holmquist, who has stepped in in previous similar circumstances, is filling in as the band continue their 50th-anniversary tour.

London's **Brixton Academy** reopens on April 19, 16 months after the crush there that killed a security guard and a fan. .

Steve Harris says he would love to write a book at some point. "It's just a question of time, because there's so many other things that I do when I'm not on tour," the Iron Maiden bassist tells broadcaster Eddie Trunk. "I probably would write a book just about the early days, really."

The Doobie Brothers are adding the final touches to a new studio album that features their former vocalist Michael McDonald. Expected in the summer, it's the first full-length release made by both parties since *One Step Closer* in 1980.

Addressing the issues surrounding his singing voice, **Jon Bon Jovi** (pictured) has revealed that he underwent "major reconstructive surgery" on his vocal cords, one of which was "literally atrophied" and replaced by a plastic implant two years ago. "I've been in rehab, getting things back together, and I'm getting very close [to normal]," says the 62-year-old.

WELCOME BACK

Dion

More than 60 years after his first hit single, he returns with an album of women-only collaborations.

At 84, Dion DiMucci shows no signs of slowing down. He first came to prominence at 17 with the Belmonts, a vocal group hand-picked from the Bronx. Having racked up hits with such evergreens as *The Wanderer* and *Runaround Sue*, Dion repeatedly changed tack to retain contemporary R&B relevance, with *King Of The New York Streets* in '89 and a trio of albums for Joe Bonamassa's label KTBA: *Blues With Friends*, *Stomping Ground* and most recently *Girl Friends*, a set of collaborations with female artists.

What inspired *Girl Friends*?
My last two albums featured a lot of collaborations, some with female artists like Samantha Fish and Rickie Lee Jones, and I had such a good time doing them that I decided to do an album exclusively with female artists that sometimes fly under the radar, wonderful artists like Joanne Shaw Taylor. I didn't want every song to be conversational across-the-table duets, so I wrote some where the girls just play guitar, or do background vocals. I wanted to mix it up a bit.

"I decided to do an album exclusively with female artists."

Why these particular artists?
I really wanted Carlene Carter on *An American Hero*. I heard her on it; that whole down-to-earth Carter family attitude. She got it, and came aboard. I wanted Susan Tedeschi for *Soul Force* because she is a soul force.

Were there names on your wish list that couldn't make it?
Christine McVie had died, and I loved her voice. She was always on my wish list. Chrissie Hynde was going to do *I Got Wise* but was too busy. Then I met Maggie Rose on Joe Bonamassa's Blues Cruise, loved her voice and, well, I had to get this thing done. Though I missed her this time, hopefully Chrissie and I will do something together in the future.

***Don't You Want A Man Like Me* is the kind of sweet-talking you'd expect of *The Wanderer*'s central protagonist.**
Exactly. There's a lot of bragging rights in the blues, and I write a lot of those songs because they're so much fun to sing: *The Wanderer*, *King Of The New York Streets* and *Don't You Want A Man Like Me*. When I did that with Rory Block she sounded like… Did you ever see *When Harry Met Sally*? When Meg Ryan has that scene in the restaurant? After we finished the song, her husband walked into the studio and said: "I wouldn't play this to your wife."

What are your recollections of playing on the ill-fated Winter Dance Party tour with Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper?
Before the crash, my memory's razor-sharp. After, I don't even remember how many weeks we played. None of us had ever been through anything this traumatic. Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, the Big Bopper were just great personalities to hang with, so for me that tour was a dream come true; two weeks, travelling with these guys, in the back of the bus singing Hank Williams songs to Buddy and Waylon Jennings. I miss those guys. They really had a big effect on my life in a lot of ways. I just wanna make 'em proud.

And retirement's still something that only happens to the other guy?
Right now I'm living the most blessed life you could live, so I'll keep doing it until God calls me home, what can I tell you? **IF**

Girl Friends is out now via KTBA and is available from ktbarecords.com

DION: DAVID GODLIS/PRESS; JON BON JOVI: MONICA

ALICE COOPER
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS
PRIMAL SCREAM
(All shows EXCEPT London)
GLEN MATLOCK
(London ONLY)
THE MEFFS
(ALL SHOWS)
TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT
OCTOBER 2024
MON 14 GLASGOW OVO HYDRO
WED 16 BIRMINGHAM UTILITA ARENA
THU 17 MANCHESTER AO ARENA
FRI 18 LEEDS FIRST DIRECT ARENA
SUN 20 LONDON SOLD OUT APOLLO
MON 21 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO
AEGPRESENTS.CO.UK | AXS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | ALICECOOPER.COM
AEG PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH UTA

Slayer Return!

Sandra Araya "harassed" husband Tom "for over a year" to reunite the band.

News of a Slayer reunion of has astonished – and, for the most part, delighted – the world of extreme metal. The Californian four-piece retired in 2019 following an extensive worldwide farewell tour. And that was that. Or so we thought. Now, amazingly, Slayer have announced that they will play three festival dates in the US in September and October.

Only a month before the announcement of their return, straight-talking guitarist Kerry King had given an explosive interview to *Rolling Stone* in promotion of his debut solo album *Idle Hands* (due on May 17). King used the platform to explain that after almost four decades of being bandmates, he and frontman/bassist Tom Araya hadn't communicated at all since the split. "Not even a text. Not even an email," the guitarist told writer Kory Grow.

Araya's wife Sandra is taking the credit for Slayer's reunion, saying that without her it "wouldn't have happened". "Tom was done with playing," Sandra said. "I have harassed him for over a year. He agreed *finally*. We shared that news with Slayer's awesome managers and they did the rest." **DL**

Slayer: a reunion that *no one* was expecting.

Lemmy Statue Approved

Metal icon to be cast in heavy metal.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council have approved plans to erect a 2.2-metre-high bronze statue of former Hawkwind and Motörhead bassist and vocalist Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister in the Market Place of Burslem, the Staffordshire town where Lemmy was born on December 24, 1945.

A fundraising campaign has been launched to raise the £50,000 that the project is likely to cost. The cast for the statue will be made from Staffordshire clay by local sculptor Andy Edwards, who also designed the statue of The Beatles that stands at Liverpool's Pier Head.

Stoke-on-Trent council approved the plans despite police concerns that it would attract "good-natured but potentially incident-generating attention". Those concerns were alleviated by the artist agreeing to raise the height of the plinth from 2.5m to 3m. **DL**

NEWS

An expanded, multi-disc version of **Def Leppard**'s multi-platinum-selling 1983 album *Pyromania* will belatedly celebrate the album's 40th anniversary. Available on April 26, the reboot includes the previously unreleased song *No You Can't Do That*, plus demos and rough mixes. A deluxe edition also includes a book of interviews conducted by *Classic Rock*'s Paul Elliott.

Jethro Tull have replaced guitarist Joe Parrish with Jack Clark, a multi-instrumentalist who has previously played live with the band.

Tull leader Ian Anderson recently confirmed that he played flute on tracks from forthcoming album by the prog-metal group Opeth.

The main artists for the second ever **Aftershock** festival in California have been confirmed. Taking place on October 10-13, its headliners are **Iron Maiden**, **Slipknot**, **Mötley Crüe** and the newly reunited **Slayer**, along with 130 bands spread across five stages. Last year's festival was headlined by Guns N' Roses, Tool, Avenged Sevenfold and Korn, and was attended by 160,000 fans.

Robert Plant (pictured) says that performing *Stairway To Heaven* for the first time since 2007, at a charity gig last year, was "cathartic" if something of "a trial by fire". When an interviewer suggested it might be the final time Plant would sing the iconic Led Zeppelin's song, he replied: "Yeah, I think you're probably right."

WELCOME BACK

Honeymoon Suite

Frontman Johnnie Dee on politics, car accidents and why jamming out is jerking off.

As Johnnie Dee cheerfully admits, Honeymoon Suite were never leading lights of the 80s scene ("There are the big bands, then there's that grey space… we're in the grey space"). But while their peers have fallen away, the Canadian band have played an excellent long game, retaining their knack for a brass-bolstered anthem – and a loyal fan base – right up to this year's album *Alive*.

What's the significance of that album title – *Alive*?

It's to tell our fans we're still here, still making music. Mike Krompass [producer] said to me: "Johnnie, what kind of record do you want to make?" And I told him: "I want something like *The Big Prize* [1985]. I want to hear the horns, those sounds, that magic." I think the fans will really like *Alive*. I can't say for sure. I mean, every artist likes their own record.

> **"The album is supposed to get you up and feeling positive."**

What's the lyrical vibe on the album?

The whole record is inspirational. It's supposed to get you up and feeling positive, put a smile on your face. *Done Doin' Me*, that's, like, when you tell your girlfriend: "I'm finished with this junk." I'm not a politics guy, so I'm not gonna write about that, because most of the time, I don't understand it. When people are reading the news, I'm like: "Er, okay". It's like computers. Give me a microphone, a guitar, a stage, and I'm fine. Give me a computer and I'm completely lost.

You've said that you have no patience for the studio.

I just want to do my stuff and get out. And it's hurt me in the past. On *The Big Prize*, Warners called Ian Anderson to come in and play flute. But I'd decided I need to go to Canada for a week. So I didn't get to be in that session. I get bored.

Your voice is still going strong. What do you put that down to?

I don't sing when I'm tired or with food in my stomach. I start warming up when my eyes open. I just found a new ear, nose and throat doctor. I needed to get checked for nodes. He came out with this camera that goes up your nose, down your throat. I hate this thing. But that moment when he said: "You're clear", that was huge.

Do you remember how Honeymoon Suite got their break?

We needed to play covers to get hired, so we'd send out a false set-list. We never actually played those songs, we did originals. But there would be some nights when the promoter would go: "Where's this song?" "Er, we don't do it." And they'd fire us.

You were hit by a car in 1987. Is that the worst accident you've had in this band?

That's the worst accident of my whole life. I was at the airport in LA and, bang! It happened so fast. I blacked out. I knew I had to shoot the cover of *Racing After Midnight* [1988], so when I finally opened my eyes I asked this cop: "Is my face okay?" He says: "Your face is fine, sir, but your leg is not." I looked down and… oh my god, it was going every which way. The car's windshield was broken. I was lucky I didn't go under it.

Can we expect the songs on the new record to evolve when you play them live? Is it that kind of band?

No, I'm a stickler not to do that. Jamming out – I call it jerking off. I think: "Play the songs as close as you can to the record. But have fun." **HY**

Alive is out now via Frontiers.

SLAYER: KEVIN NIXON; ROBERT PLANT: DENISE TRUSCELLO/GETTY

"We like a lot of the seventies New York punk stuff."

★ HIGH HOPES

Gen & The Degenerates

Meet the "accidentally punk" rising alt.rockers fronted by a former circus aerialist.

"I SEE IT as a time capsule of what it's like to be in your twenties, during the end of the world as we know it," says Genevieve Glynn-Reeves. The singer/lyricist laughs, but there's a sincerity in her tone.

At a time when spikily confessional voices like IDLES, Amyl & The Sniffers and Kid Kapichi are so prevalent in rock, Gen & The Degenerates' debut feels ripe for success. Produced by Ross Orton (Gang Of Four, Arctic Monkeys), *Anti-Fun Propaganda* is a smart, funny slice of the modern age, told in riffy, punky alt.rock vignettes. Online living, gender politics and global tensions are explored with incisive energy. It's silly, sexy and serious.

"I think we're accidentally punk," Glynn-Reeves say. "We like a lot of the 70s New York punk stuff, but we've hit a wave where punk is really resurging. Basically it's the fact that I do the talky thing, but that's more from me coming from a spoken-poetry background, because I did creative writing and drama at uni."

As a queer student carving a niche in Liverpool, Glynn-Reeves pored over the works of Benjamin Zephaniah and local writer (also her tutor) Jeff Town. She found a sense of belonging with bandmates Sean Healand-Sloan (guitar), Jacob Jones (guitar), Evan Reeves (drums) and Jay Humphreys (bass). They shared a diverse pool of tastes, from Metallica to Green Day to the Eurythmics.

"We're best friends," Glynn-Reeves says, "we got into a band because we loved spending time together, and we had to work out how to make the music make sense. A lot of that was Ross [Orton]."

Raised in a "wonky" bungalow next to an A-road in Cambridgeshire, by a maths genius father and a florist mother, Glynn-Reeves had a free-form childhood. "It [the bungalow] had this amazing long garden that my dad let go completely wild. I grew up running around in wellies, and nothing else."

Storytellers featured heavily in her musical diet – Kirsty MacColl, Annie Lennox and various old blues singers, alongside the likes of Blondie and The Stranglers. As a teenager she wrote songs and jammed with friends, alongside working as a circus aerialist. She loved circus life and wanted to pursue it, until debilitating issues with ME (also known as chronic fatigue syndrome) ended that.

It was a turning point. She poured herself into music and the band. She shaved her head, frustrated at the focus on her previous blonde-bobbed, red-lipsticked look.

"I didn't want to be for the male gaze any more," she says. "It was in part to do with the health stuff, because that makes me so bloated, and I just wanted to be comfortable. But when I was in the 'blonde bombshell' era, that was the thing people took first. At first I was like: 'This is really fun.' But then I started to think: 'People aren't noticing how funny I am, how clever and creative I am'. So I wanted to force people to look at those other things first." **PG**

ANTI-FUN PROPAGANDA is out now via Marshall.

FOR FANS OF...

With a mix of inspirations (rock, riot grrrl, old blues singers), G&TD aren't indebted to one group. So it's by chance more than design that their observational alt. rock channels Arctic Monkeys' literate debut. "I do love Arctic Monkeys," Genevieve says, "and IDLES, and Bikini Kill. So they're all big parts of it."

The Waterboys

The Whole Of The Moon

A song whose key line its writer Mike Scott says "floated into my mind as if by magic", it's still The Waterboys' signature track and a magic moment live, and has inspired many covers.

Words: **Rob Hughes**

The Waterboys' most famous song was the response to a challenge. In New York City in early 1985, Mike Scott was walking back towards the Gramercy Park Hotel with then-girlfriend Krista King, when she asked him if it was easy to write songs. "It was a cold, clear January night," Scott recalls, "and I said: 'Yes, it is. I'll write one now.' So I looked around for some inspiration, and there was a moon in the sky. This phrase *'I saw the crescent, you saw the whole of the moon'* floated into my mind as if by magic, right on cue." The Waterboys' leader scribbled it down on an envelope taken from his pocket. Back at the hotel he added more lines.

On his return to London a few days later, Scott began working on the lyric in earnest. *The Whole Of The Moon* would become the band's signature moment, a platinum-selling single and the centrepiece of the band's commercial-breakthrough album *This Is The Sea*. With its jubilant chorus and brass fanfares, it also established The Waterboys at the forefront of the 'Big Music', a brand of widescreen, impassioned 80s rock built for big stages and thumping hearts. It also inspired a host of cover versions, including from U2, Prince, The Killers and, most recently, Bleachers.

For the first six weeks of its life, though, *The Whole Of The Moon* was just lyrics on a page. It was only when Scott began sifting through demos in the studio that inspiration for the music took hold.

"For the first couple of days, *This Is The Sea* co-producer John Brand recorded me singing things from my songwriting book on piano," Scott explains. "And while I was doing that, I tried some older songs of mine, in case they worked. One was called *The Mercenary And The Samaritan* and there's a reason you've never heard of it: it wasn't very good. But it had this really funky piano rhythm that stayed in my mind. And either later that day or the next day, I came upon this new *The Whole Of The Moon* lyric and tried it with that piano rhythm. It fit!"

Scott's piano and Chris Whitten's insistent drum pattern form the backbone of the song, but it's Karl Wallinger's inventive synth parts that provide movement and flex.

"I wanted the song to sound like carousel music going round and round," says Scott. "Karl had a Ensoniq Mirage synthesiser, and my brief to him was: 'Can you make it sound like a carnival?' So he played it very funky, kind of like Prince's part on *1999*, but less monolithic than that. He's constantly changing it, decorating it, withholding something for a few bars and then delivering. I was also really into Prince's *Around The World In A Day*, which had just come out. On the track *Paisley Park*, particularly, there were these little four- or five-note synth motifs that had this exquisite, almost rubbery sound that you could reach out and touch. I said to Karl: 'Could you get a sound like that and play some short melodies that fulfil the same kind of role?' You can hear those at judicious points in the song. It's a beautiful, masterful performance."

"I was twenty-six and just coming into my sense of myself as a songwriter."

Scott would acknowledge the musical debt by writing a short message on the finished label: "For Prince, U saw the whole of the moon."

The Whole Of The Moon's great lift-off moment arrives two minutes in, with the arrival of Roddy Lorimer's joyful trumpet. This is the cue for repeated blasts later on and another great horn riff from saxophonist Anthony Thistlethwaite, whose solo is presaged by the explosive sound of a firework with added studio echo.

"At first I tried a fiddle player for that initial trumpet part," Scott recalls, "but it wasn't pop enough. It needed to sound like clouds parting and the sun shining through. In my mind I had that solo from *Penny Lane*, the way it bursts out. So I played Roddy the song, he took a cassette home, and came back the next day with this beautiful four-part section written."

Lyrically, *The Whole Of The Moon* has been open to much discussion over the years. Prince, writer CS Lewis and Scott's former collaborator Nikki Sudden are among the names routinely bandied about as possible subject matter, reflecting the song's sense of wonderment through the eyes of a narrator confronted by someone with greater experience and imagination in their understanding of the world. Scott insists, however, that it's not about anyone specific.

"I was twenty-six and just coming into my sense of myself as a songwriter," he explains. "And learning about being a human being as well. I didn't have anybody in mind when I wrote *The Whole Of The Moon*. I just knew it was a *kind* of character, like a Jimi Hendrix-esque character who emerges into everybody's lives fully formed and burns like a supernova and then burns out or disappears or dies too early. It's about how amazing it is to live in a world where so much is available, where a human being can grow and learn like that. It's a dramatic, celebratory song with a real big climax. And that's because it's describing something wonderful."

On its release in October 1985, in the immediate wake of *This Is The Sea*, *The Whole Of The Moon* peaked just inside the UK Top 30. It quickly became a fan favourite, eventually meriting a reissue to coincide with a Waterboys best-of compilation in 1991. This time it made the top three. Its belated recognition brought Scott an Ivor Novello Award later that year.

The intervening years have only seen its reputation soar. "It's got a long life, so it's been good to me," Scott says. "And it still seems to be a current song, because people keep covering it. I was on stage at a big festival in Ireland a few months ago, singing it with The Killers, for example. *The Whole Of The Moon* has got great live legs. When the entire crowd is singing it back at me, it's such a glorious feeling."

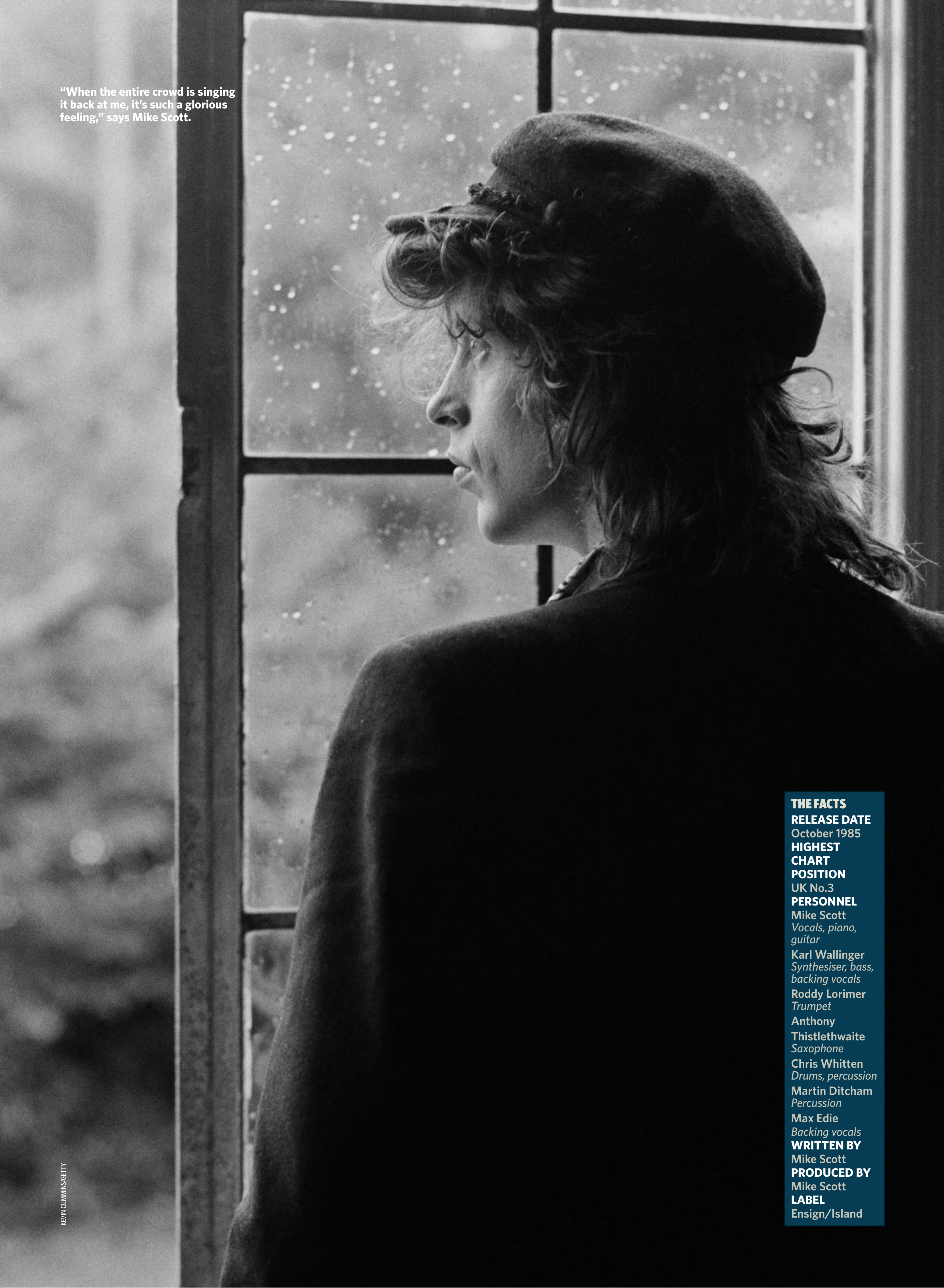
The Waterboys box set 1985 is out now.

REACHING FOR THE MOON

The Whole Of The Moon has inspired many cover versions over the years, but Mike Scott is especially proud of the fact that Prince performed it twice. The first time was at Ronnie Scott's in London in February 2014, in front of just 200 people. He revisited the song in May the following year at Paisley Park Studios.

"Apparently, at Ronnie Scott's he just did it solo on piano," Scott marvels. "Goodness, would I like to hear that! I wonder if he sang it in a falsetto voice. Oh my God! Then the second time was as a drum'n'bass, funk, Black Lives Matter protest song, where he flipped the lyrics around to 'I *saw the whole of the moon*.' That one *is* available on the internet, and it's brilliant."

PRINCE: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY



"When the entire crowd is singing it back at me, it's such a glorious feeling," says Mike Scott.

KEVIN CUMMINS/GETTY

THE FACTS

RELEASE DATE
October 1985

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
UK No.3

PERSONNEL
Mike Scott
Vocals, piano, guitar
Karl Wallinger
Synthesiser, bass, backing vocals
Roddy Lorimer
Trumpet
Anthony Thistlethwaite
Saxophone
Chris Whitten
Drums, percussion
Martin Ditcham
Percussion
Max Edie
Backing vocals

WRITTEN BY
Mike Scott

PRODUCED BY
Mike Scott

LABEL
Ensign/Island

Q&A

Kris Barras

The blues-rocker on getting heavier, top advice from Billy Gibbons, and being a "Poundshop version" of Richie Kotzen.

Interview: **Dave Everley**

If he wasn't a musician, Kris Barras could work for the Torquay tourist board. "It's a beautiful place to live, especially when the sun is shining," the former MMA champion-turned-singer and guitarist says of his West Country home town. "I've never moved to London, though I'm not sure how much of a choice that is; I've got a house here, my wife's job is here."

He may not have gone far geographically, but musically it's a different matter. *The Halo Effect*, the Kris Barras Band's fifth album, is the heaviest thing they've recorded to date, bringing even more metal muscle to their music and moving further away from their original blues-rock sound.

You wrote a lot of *The Halo Effect* on the tour bus while you were out supporting your 2022 album *Death Valley Paradise*. Shouldn't you be partying when you're on the road?

Yeah. But the problem is that when you're doing twenty-eight dates in thirty-two days or whatever, there's only so much partying you can do. We set up the studio in the top lounge of the bus, which I'd never done before – when you're in a van it's not a great writing environment. But on that tour we put together the heaviest set we've ever done, and people were really vibing off it. That kick-started the new album. We wanted to go even heavier with it.

What does 'The Halo Effect' mean?

It's a psychological thing, a cognitive bias where you take a view of someone because they've done something in a favourable light and you use that to form an opinion on other stuff they do. It's a nod to some of the people in power: *'They're millionaires, they must be good at making money, they'll make us millionaires too.'* Yeah, well…

There's a song on the new album titled *Unbreakable*. What's that about?

Everybody gets knocked back in life, it's how you come back from it. Like most people, I've had setbacks, moments where you think: "Fuck, this is it." Covid was one time when I was very close to packing it all in and going to do something else with my life. But then you find the strength to carry on.

Who is the song *Savage* aimed at?

It's about how people in power, the elite, view the everyday person as savages: *'Okay, you think we're savages, we know you think we're scum, we're going to own it.'* I'm not some activist guy, I don't have any affiliation with any political party, but it's clear to see when there's injustices and disservices in the world.

Your journey to this point has taken you a long way from your blues-rock roots. Was that a conscious decision?

It wasn't anything as conscious as "I need to get away from blues rock." I was never true blues. I grew up in the nu-metal era, when bands like Slipknot were on *Top Of The Pops* and Limp Bizkit were in the charts. In my teens I was playing in metal bands, all my training playlists are Avenged Sevenfold, Parkway Drive, stuff like that. It's always been fighting to come out.

Was it a commercial decision? Did you think: "We can sell more records if we do this"?

Not at all, but that ended up happening. The albums gradually got a little bit more rocky as they went along. I was trying to write some blues stuff, but it's such a limiting genre. I'd done three albums of blues rock, and I thought: "I'm writing the same stuff." This is still my voice and guitar playing, I've just widened the boundaries of what I do.

Have you had any complaints from long-time fans?

Yeah, we get a lot of it. Everyone's entitled to their own opinions, but I wasn't going to do another album like that. I wasn't writing blues-rock music. You're not missing out, because it just wasn't going to exist.

Did you ever think about changing the band's name?

It's tricky. There was a point where I would have liked to. But I've heavily invested in this financially over the years, and if you change your name, what happens then? I look at someone like Richie Kotzen, who is one of my heroes and has actually become a friend of mine. He's got blues albums, he's got jazz albums, metal albums, the Winery Dogs, all of this stuff. He's able to do all of these different things. I like to think I'm a Poundshop version of that [laughs].

You're still keeping your hand in with Supersonic Blues Machine alongside Billy Gibbons. What's the best bit of advice he's ever given you?

He's such a road dog. He's built for touring. On our first tour, we'd done some mad journey all over Europe with connecting flights, and we hadn't had any sleep because we were travelling overnight. I was moaning backstage: "Fuck, I'm really tired, I don't know how I'm gonna do this." And Billy goes: "Kris, remember: we don't *have* to do this, we *get* to do this." He was saying there are people out there with much shitter jobs that this one, stop fucking whingeing and get out there. And I was like, that's fucking true. It's stuck with me.

According to Wikipedia, the most famous people from Torquay are Agatha Christie, the late comedian Peter Cook and the explorer Percy Fawcett. Does that make you the fourth-most-famous person from Torquay?

Ha! I'm not sure that's true. Muse are from a ten-minute drive down the road. I'm sure they count.

Have you been given the keys to the town? Or had a park bench named after you?

Not yet. There's still time, though.

Do you think you'll ever go back and make a blues-rock record with the Kris Barras Band?

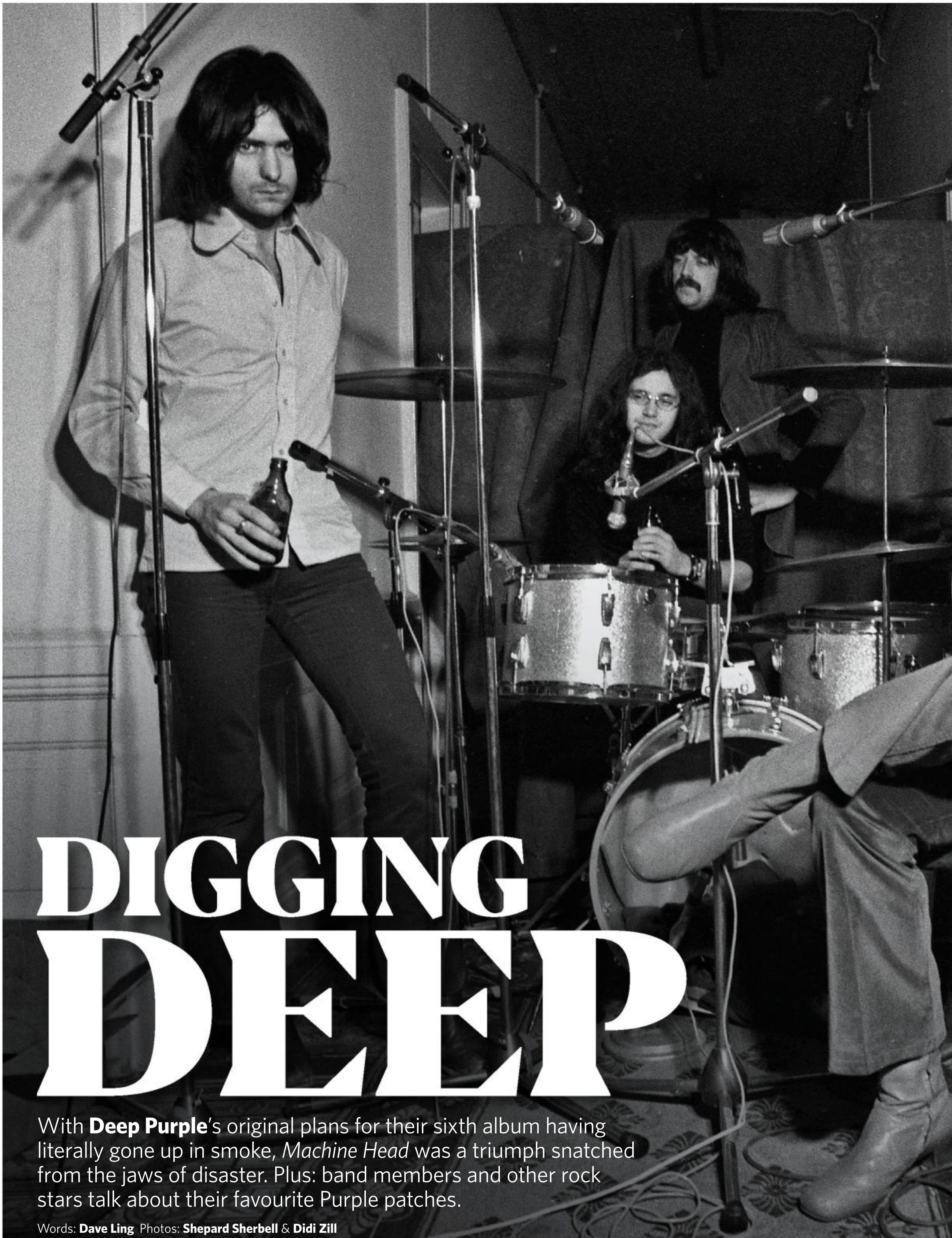
I'd never say never. Maybe a throwback tour one day, maybe go out and do something raw and bluesy. But at the moment I'm on this path and enjoying it. It's a different vibe. It feels right.

The Halo Effect is out on April 12 via Earache.

Kris Barras: left his blues-rock roots behind – but not his love of ink.

"I was very close to packing it all in and going to do something else with my life."

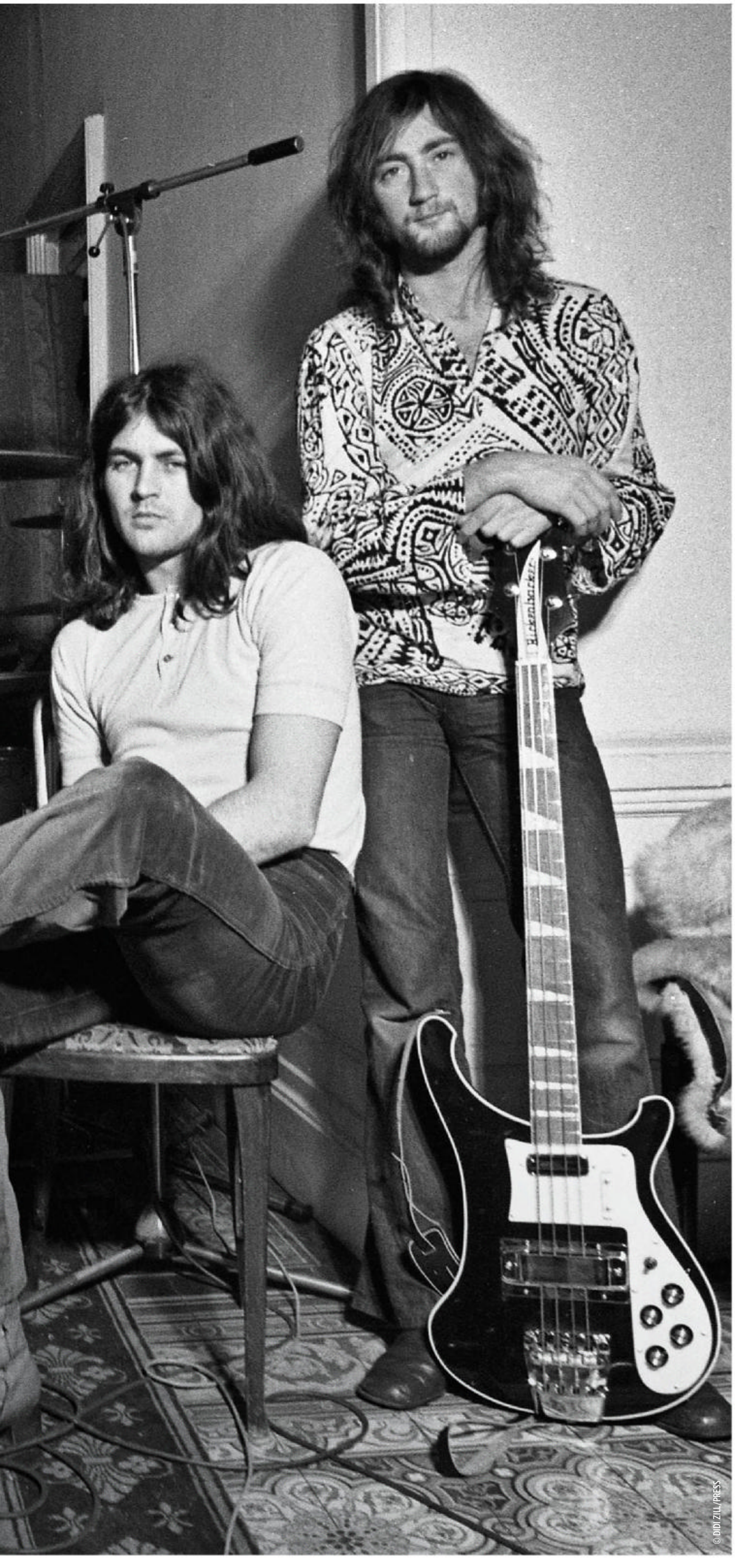
DEAN CHALKLEY/PRESS



DIGGING DEEP

With **Deep Purple**'s original plans for their sixth album having literally gone up in smoke, *Machine Head* was a triumph snatched from the jaws of disaster. Plus: band members and other rock stars talk about their favourite Purple patches.

Words: **Dave Ling** Photos: **Shepard Sherbell** & **Didi Zill**



© DIDI ZILL/PRESS

The dramatic tale of Deep Purple's sixth album has rightly been etched into rock music folklore for more than half a century. Frankly, if you haven't heard it, then you're probably reading the wrong magazine, but here's the gist of what happened. Fancying the idea of working in an unusual environment and also avoiding punitive UK tax laws, the band's celebrated Mk II line-up – vocalist Ian Gillan, guitarist Richie Blackmore, keyboard player Jon Lord, bassist Roger Glover and drummer Ian Paice – booked the Montreux Casino, overlooking Lake Geneva, a picturesque yet somewhat unlikely location, with producer engineer Martin Birch and the Rolling Stones Mobile hired to capture the sounds.

The events of December 4, 1971, shall never be forgotten. Immediately before the session, during a concert by Frank Zappa And The Mothers Of Invention some idiot shot a flare gun into the ceiling, and the building burned to the ground. On the other side of the lake, the Purple contingent looked on as their plans literally went up in flames. However, inspired by the billowing smoke drifting across the water towards them, at least they got a pretty good song out of it all.

Looking for a new place to record, an attempt to use a local theatre was thwarted due to noise pollution. So with hundreds of mattresses and blankets piled up around them in a corridor to dampen down the sound, and the Stones Mobile set up outside the building, making checking the playbacks very difficult, they began work on the record now known as *Machine Head* at freezing cold, out-of-season hotel The Grand.

"It was a huge, forbidding place – cold, damp, with great ceilings and echoing corridors," Jon Lord recalled decades later. "I wouldn't have wanted to stay there in a million years. But we could get it for about thruppence a week."

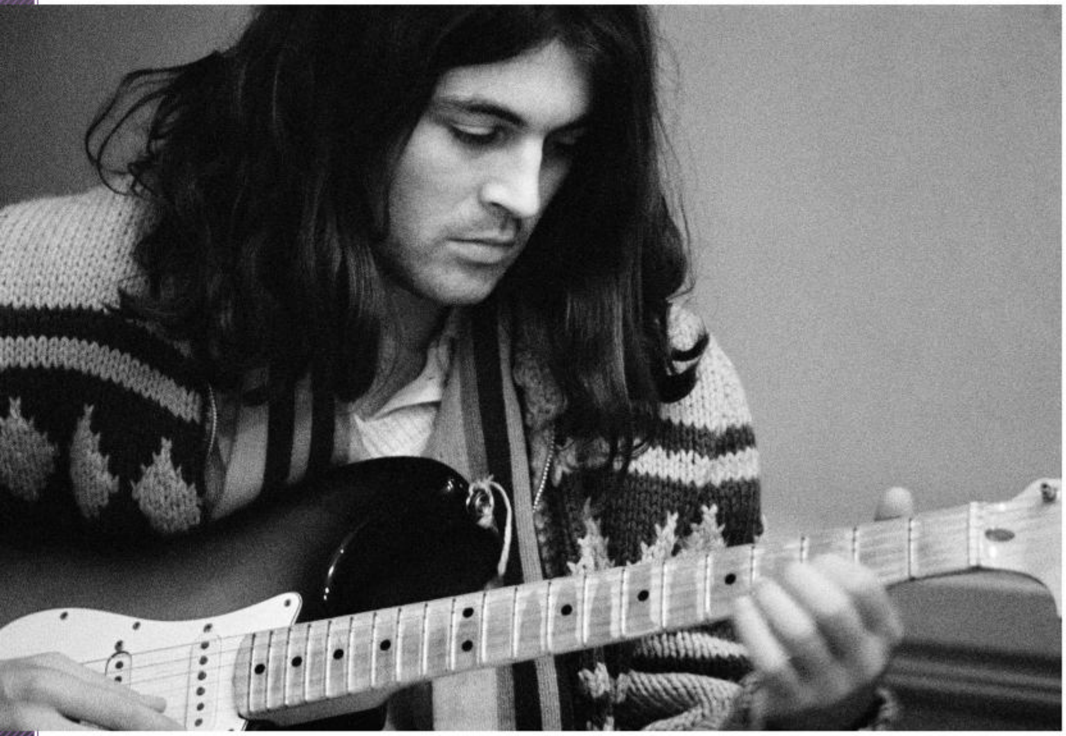
Released on March 25, 1972, *Machine Head* topped the chart in the UK and across the world. In America it thrust them into the Top 10 there for the first time. By 1986 it had sold two million copies in the US.

Blackmore, who quit the band for the first time three years later, told *Classic Rock*: "We made *Machine Head* in three weeks and three days, I think. It was very productive, very constructive, and it had some really good songs. It captured what we were about at the time. *Machine Head* came out and it was a reasonable hit. But it wasn't until *Made In Japan* [Purple's celebrated double live album released in December 1972], when we did those songs on stage, that people actually absorbed it and registered that it was a good record. I was surprised because I preferred the recorded [studio] versions."

Down the years and in various formats, *Machine Head* has been repackaged many times, including a seemingly definitive five-disc 40th-anniversary package. Now comes the Super Deluxe edition – a three-CD/gatefold LP/Blu-ray bumper package that adds new stereo and Dolby Atmos mixes by Zappa's son Dweezil, using the original multitrack tapes, nine previously unheard tracks performed at the Montreux Casino in 1971, and a performance from the BBC's Paris Theatre in London during the year of the album's release.

When asked how he feels about the repackaging of albums he made more than half a century ▷

Solemn days, during the recording of *Machine Head* in an old hotel in Montreux, Switzerland: (clockwise from left) Ian Paice, Roger Glover, Jon Lord, Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan.



"It didn't occur to me until years later that the elements of Purple covered the whole spectrum of music." Ian Gillan

ago, Ian Gillan shrugs: "I can see why [the record companies] are doing it. They have to make the music reach today's audiences, I suppose. Everyone has to work their catalogue, so from a business point of view it makes complete sense. I think this new version will reach a lot of people who weren't there at the time."

On the day that *Classic Rock* spoke to Ian Gillan, he hadn't heard the Zappa remixes in their entirety, although the singer remains enthusiastic.

"Roger and I were at my place in Portugal working on the new Purple album when we were sent the new version of *Smoke On The Water*, and we went: 'Oh my God'," he exclaims. "It's hard for me to compare the two versions, because obviously one is ingrained in your mind over a very long period of time. But having said that, there's also the fact that the *Smoke On The Water* that I know best is the one that we do on stage. From a subjective perspective, I'm quite happy with all of this."

One rarely mentioned aspect is that nobody holds a gun to anyone's head. If you've still got the original vinyl bought back in the 70s, or you consider any of the CD reisues to be sufficient, then stick with those.

"That's right. And there's a big discussion about this," Gillan acknowledges. "I must admit, I can see both sides of the debate. I had some things to say when the Beatles and the Zeppelin albums were remixed. It was a struggle for me, because I had been there at the time. The same rule applies here, I'm aware of that."

However, if the process is conducted with sufficient care and thought, then it's possible to do it with integrity.

"Again, I agree," Gillan affirms. "I'm very impressed with what has been done here."

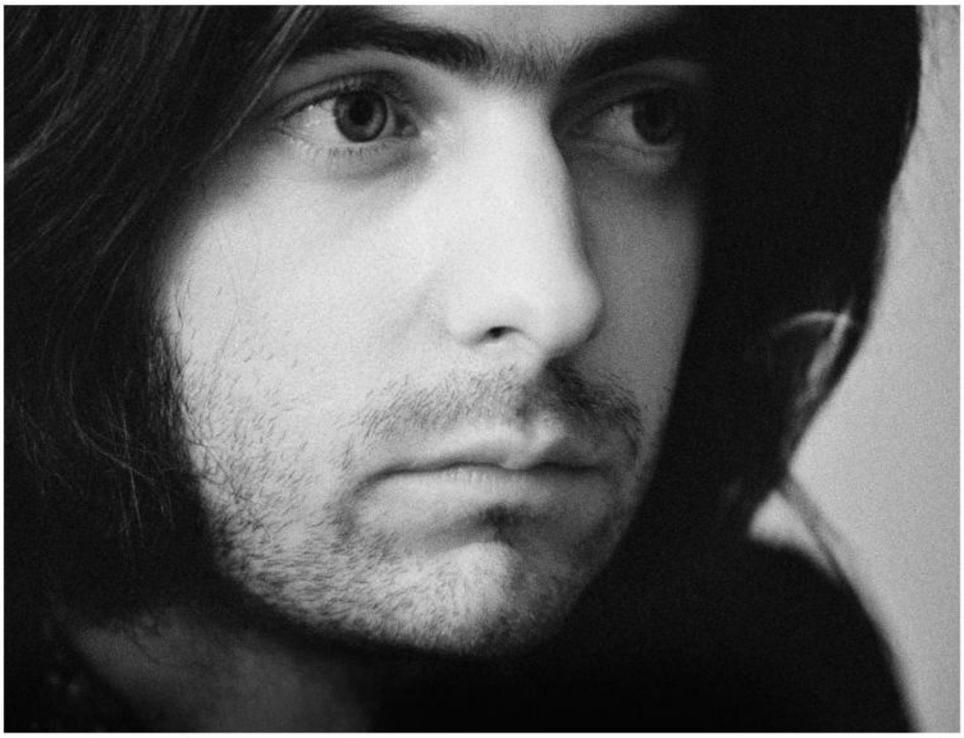
The live tracks recorded at the ill-fated Montreux Casino are a nice touch.

"I haven't heard those, either" [laughs]. "I have just signed off on the new Deep Purple album, so that's where my attention has been."

At such an early stage, Gillan is reticent to discuss that album, Purple's twenty-third and the follow-up to their 2021 covers set *Turning To Crime*, apart from saying: "I'm thrilled to bits with what's coming. It's the first album that we've made with Simon [McBride, the guitarist who replaced Steve Morse in '22] and I think the fans will be very pleased with it. I don't want to say much more than that, except that I think it will be out in July."

Let's go back to the early 1970s. What goes through Gillan's mind when he hears newly unearthed recordings from the period, full of improvisation and charged with the spirit and fearlessness of youth?

"Well, I'm very proud to have been in the band," he says. "Whether through serendipity or not, call it what you like, we are bloody survivors. Back then we took all of the things that you just mentioned for granted, though I didn't realise that at the time. I came from a musical family; my grandad sang opera, my uncle was a jazz pianist, and I was a boy soprano in the church choir. Then I heard *Heartbreak Hotel* [released by Elvis Presley in 1956] and everything changed. It didn't occur to me until years later that the elements of Purple covered the whole spectrum of music, from classical composition to jazz, blues and rock'n'roll, soul and funk – it was all there. For all of that to come together was almost a miracle. I think that's



what gave us the ability take things into different areas. It got us through an awful lot.

"I don't think the band was ever contrived, except maybe perhaps during the 1980s," he continues. "We felt a little displaced from our identity as fashions changed. I don't think we had the confidence to be quite as bold as before [the reunion]. There was pressure to shrink into something that was acceptable, but that wasn't the fault of Roger [Glover], because we didn't have in-house production the time. We were spending far too long on arrangements, and to be perfectly honest sometimes the writing wasn't really up to scratch. As we emerged from that, I was able to look back with more confidence on the early days, and they were quite remarkable. So listening to those live recordings, the freedom and joy we had, and the confidence in each other, is remarkable."

Did being on stage with Purple sometimes feel like walking a tightrope?

"I'd call it a multi-dimensional trapeze act, not a bloody tightrope [laughs]. "There certainly was no safety net, that's for sure."

Dweezil Zappa says *Machine Head* is: "One of those records where I think: 'How did they come up with this?'" And Bruce Dickinson from Iron Maiden has stated that his first exposure to Deep Purple was like hearing music from another planet. Gillan touched upon this theme already, but has he ever pondered along the same lines as Dweezil and Bruce?

"Well, I only did so only afterwards," he considers. "Distance provides objectivity, but at the time we didn't spend much time analysing things. We were too busy doing it. There was no need to analyse – it just *was*."

Do you think of *Machine Head* as the crown jewel of the Purple catalogue?

"Yes – of that [first] era. And it's certainly one of the top three [of our career]. Which albums are those?" he asks with a laugh. "Well, it all depends on the day. I'll say that *Fireball* was important. We couldn't have done *Machine Head* without [its 1971 predecessor] *Fireball*. But it changes on a daily basis."

Over the pages that follow, dozens of musicians have picked and talk about their favourite tracks by Deep Purple. Ex-Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi went with *Speed King*, Paul Stanley of Kiss and many others chose *Burn*, while Joe Bonamassa picked a very specific version of *Child In Time* – it had to be the one from *Made In Japan*.

"I'm looking forward to reading them," Gillan states. "I think Joe is probably right. I'm not a big fan of live albums, but the live version of *Child In Time* is better than the studio one. The *Made In Japan* version is crazy."

In discussing his choice, Mr. Big singer Eric Martin related a tale of being invited into your trailer to discuss a guest appearance on a Rock Meets Classic tour in Germany, only to find you butt-naked. "Apparently, Ian is a nudist," he told us.

"That's right," Gillan says, "I *am* a nudist. That's why I live up in the hills."

Martin also mentioned that you are, as he put it, "hung like a Clydesdale horse".

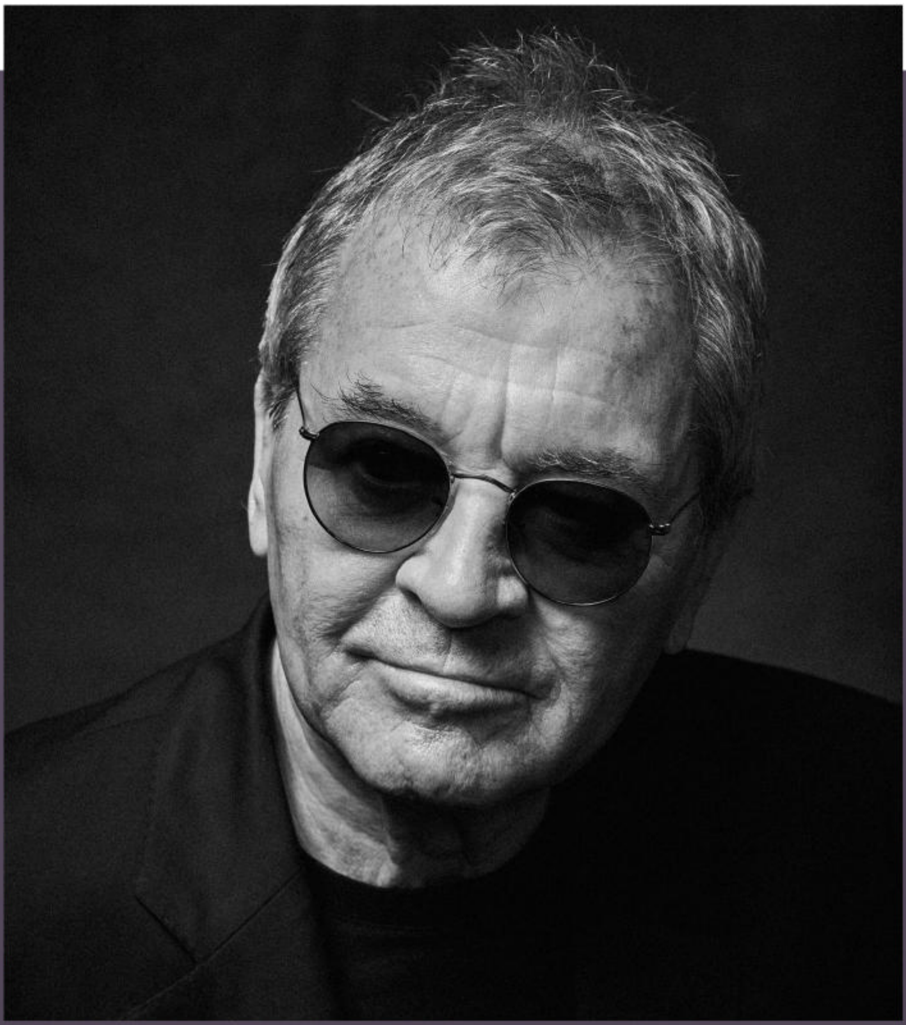
"I don't know what Eric had been smoking that day," Gillan responds with a laugh. "If I am hung like a Clydesdale horse, then it's only during the warmer weather."

"Whether through serendipity or not, call it what you like, we are bloody survivors."

Ian Gillan

Deep Purple's Machine Head: Super Deluxe is available via Universal Music.

SHEPARD SHERBELL/GETTY x5



IAN GILLAN

The man at the mic picks five Deep dazzlers.

Mary Long

(*Who Do We Think We Are*, 1973)

"I'd like to point out that I'm choosing these songs spontaneously, they could all change tomorrow. I like *Mary Long* because nobody had written a song like that before. [The name Mary Long was a composite of the 'moral crusaders' Mary Whitehouse and Lord Longford, who were particularly active in the 60s and 70s. Its opening lines were: '*Mary Long is a hypocrite/She does all the things that she tells us not to do*'.] I was twenty-something years old and full of opinions."

Rapture Of The Deep

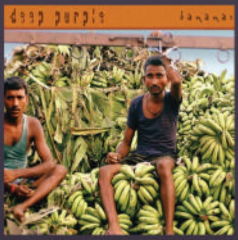
(*Rapture Of The Deep*, 2005)

"I think *Rapture* is quite similar to a song like *Pictures Of Home* [from *Machine Head*]. It was a very good collaboration between Steve Morse and Don Airey. *Rapture Of The Deep* has a slight Oriental feel to it. The riff is great – and I think the words are pretty good too [laughs]."

Razzle Dazzle

(*Bananas*, 2003)

"I'm picking this one just to annoy Ian Paice, who doesn't like it. Me, I think it's brilliant. But Ian comes from an entirely different perspective – sitting behind the drums."



Into The Fire

(*In Rock*, 1970)

"*Into The Fire* has always been one of my all-time favourites that we did. I still love singing that one right to the present day. It's a slice of pure, raucous, uninhibited rock'n'roll – albeit mid-tempo rock'n'roll."

Lazy

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"I'm going to pick something from the album we're here to talk about… Let's say *Lazy*. [When *Classic Rock* asks Ian whether he means the studio version, or the longer, looser take on *Made In Japan*, Gillan ponders the question for a moment and then with a smirk replies: "Both".]

Hush

(*Shades Of Deep Purple*, 1968)

"I was a fan of the original Purple, with Rod Evans on vocals, before the arrival of Ian Gillan. As a teenager I got to see the Mk I line-up of the band; believe me, I was a fan. The first time I heard their version of *Hush* [which was written by the American singer-songwriter Joe South] it blew me away. I mean: 'Who is this?!'"

RICKEY MEDLOCKE, LYNYRD SKYNYRD

"*Hush* reached Number Two on the chart in Canada, where I'm from. I still remember hearing it on the radio as a tiny girl and singing it over and over again. Inspired by an old gospel tune of the same name by Joe South, Purple's version has every element of what I love about rock'n'roll. It has an infectious tribal rhythm, cool harmonies and dynamics and ferocious musicianship. I also love those hooky 'na na na's. Blackmore squeezes in an infinite amount of nasty guitar licks; Ian Paice and those signature drum fills; oozing, bluesy vocals; and – the icing on the cake – Jon Lord's wicked Hammond solo. Yet still, this somehow manages to be a pop tune. How did they even do that? I've spent my whole career trying to make music like this."

LEE AARON

"There are many hard rock songs by Purple that I could have picked, but I love the one that started it all off for the band – their version of *Hush*. The whole tune and its overall energy is great, but the contribution of Jon Lord is what makes it *really* special. His B3 [Hammond organ] playing on that song is like nothing else I ever heard. I could name other classic rock songs with astounding B3 licks – *Gimme Some Loving* by the Spencer Davis Group would be one, but Lord's performance on that song makes it one of the greatest fucking records I ever heard. It fucking rips me up every time."

WALTER TROUT

IAN PAICE SAYS

"The studio version was brilliant. *Hush* is still one of those songs that when it comes on the radio, you turn it up.

GILLAN: BEN WOLF/PRESS; RICKEY MEDLOCKE: RICK DIAMOND/GETTY

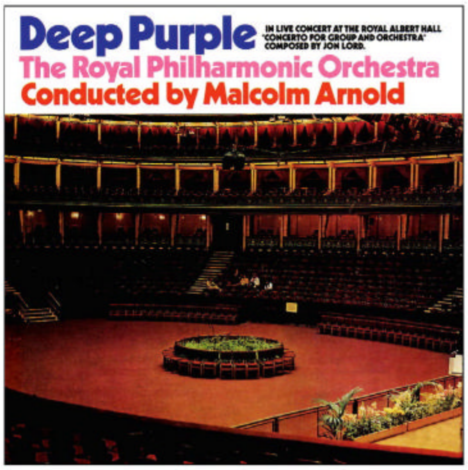
"The whole of that first album was done in one eight-hour session, eight tracks in eight hours, though of course we'd practised for a couple of months. *Hush* is just a great track. Fifty-odd years later we still play it live and it's become a samba. The original was a country tune, but it's like Brazilian music. We take things right down and everybody in the crowd sings it. It's wonderful."

Help!

(*Shades Of Deep Purple*, 1968)

"I still remember buying *Shades Of Deep Purple* and thinking that it was way ahead of anything else that came out at that time. It had so many great songs. *Hush* had been a big single for them, but I really loved their version of [The Beatles'] *Help!* It had beautiful organ and also superb guitar parts – it was a real *band* track. In my view, Rod Evans had the perfect voice for *Help!*, which Purple played as a ballad and not the way we know it as a Beatles song. In fact, many years later John Lennon admitted that he wrote *Help!* as a ballad. When you listen to Purple's version, it makes you realise that they were playing the song as it had been intended, and not a pop song."

RICK WAKEMAN



Concerto For Group And Orchestra

(*Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, 1969)

"In my school days I was really impressed with the album *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, which was recorded by the band at the Royal Albert Hall in London. And I thought then, unwisely, that in the future, should I ever headline the Albert Hall, I should do Otway And Orchestra.

"When the time finally came, I was advised that to do what Deep Purple did with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra would be prohibitively expensive. But luckily, at the time I was listening to their album I was in the Aylesbury Youth Orchestra, and to my delight, albeit with a few line-up changes, they still existed. So I was able to realise my Deep Purple-inspired dream thirty years later."

JOHN OTWAY

Early shade of Purple: (l-r) Ritchie Blackmore, Rod Evans, Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Nick Simper.

IAN PAICE SAYS:

"The *Concerto For Group And Orchestra* was a wonderfully brave experiment. We were recording the debuts of Ian [Gillan] and Roger [Glover] on stage on a piece of classical music written by Jon Lord, performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra… before an audience *at the Royal Albert Hall?*

"There was no monitoring of the sound on stage back then, and even in those days Deep Purple was a very loud band. We played the whole thing without hearing the orchestra even once. We just had to pray that everyone was in the same place.

"During the movement with the drum solo, I was supposed to bring the orchestra back in with a cowbell, and I couldn't remember the part. [Conductor] Malcolm Arnold stood there with his arms crossed and turned away from me with a look of absolute disdain."

Black Night

(Non-album single, 1970)

"I grew up alongside those guys, and I'm a big fan. For me, it's hard to beat *Black Night*. What an enormous riff – one of the biggest and best of all time. I love to play it myself, and I've played it on stage with the guys. Playing off Paicey, one of the most monumental drummers in music, is quite something. He has that signature shuffle that not many people can do well. Being on stage with him, and locking into that, was one of the most memorable moments of my career.

"*Black Night* has got the best drum break in the world… [Brian imitates it, laughing]… that always makes me smile."

BRIAN MAY, QUEEN

"When that song came out I just couldn't stop playing it. It was so good. I used to go to my local Working Men's Club, and it was on the jukebox. After a while everybody got a bit sick of me playing it [laughs].

"Ritchie Blackmore used a floating trem on it, and ever since I used one too. He was brave to have one on a Fender, as the technology wasn't fully there yet. When I used mine on *The Sinner* it was always squeaky-bum time."

KK DOWNING, KK'S PRIEST

"We're privileged to have played with Deep Purple almost forty times. When we're out with them, each of us has one particular favourite that we try not to miss each night, one that you scurry from where you are in the arena to reach the side of the stage for, and for me it's *Black Night*. There's an energy about *Black Night* that no other song of theirs has. The riff is epic, it's singalong-able, everything about it is perfect."

JON HARVEY, MONSTER TRUCK

IAN PAICE SAYS

"That song is madness, really. The record company wanted a single, but we were perpetually out on the road. We went into De Lane Lea Studios in London without a song. After jamming for a while we *still* had nothing, and Ritchie said: 'This is hopeless, let's go to the pub.' When we came out at chucking-out time, nobody was in a fit state for anything. Somebody remembered an old Ricky Nelson version of a George Gerschwin tune called *Summertime* that went… [he hums the riff]. We decided to take that and change it a bit. I was wobbling behind the kit by now.

"We were pissed off at being told we had to write a hit record, so I started to play drum fills that shouldn't fit, crossing the tempos over. Gillan wrote the most ridiculous lyrics ever: '*Black night, can't see dark light, can't feel so bright*'. An hour later we had our song. The record company loved it: 'Genius, boys!' The public loved it too. But it was literally done in about two hours of drunkenness." ▷

MAY: PAUL HARMER/PRESS; MAIN: HEC ENTERPRISES LTD

Child In Time

(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

"My dad introduced me to Deep Purple when I was eleven years old, and to this day he wants Halestorm to cover that song. I keep on having to tell him: 'We really can't do that, it's fifteen minutes long!' [*It's actually a little over ten minutes – Ed*]. One of these days we may give it try.

"I love Deep Purple's radio hits, but every time I put together a playlist of theirs – or if my dad is visiting – we always have to play *Child In Time*. As a vocalist, all you can do is stand back and appreciate that performance by Ian Gillan because it's spectacular. Those high notes… Look, I can sing high, but I would be very nervous to go up that far. And as a song, *Child In Time* takes the listener on an incredible journey. It's a really long song, but it never gets old."

LZZY HALE, HALESTORM

"No disrespect to Glenn Hughes, who is a fantastic singer, but it's the *classic* Deep Purple with Ian Gillan and Ritchie Blackmore that I love. I could have just as easily picked *Speed King*, but I'm going to go with *Child In Time*. I love the way they used dynamics. So much of today's hard rock or heavy metal is so dense; it's full-volume from start to finish. Deep Purple were masters of building the tension, and it's hard to name a better example than *Child In Time*. It goes from a low whisper to a massive roar. I'm a massive fan of Ian Paice, but every member of the band plays the right thing as the song builds. And as for that lead vocal from Gillan – wow, it's just incredible."

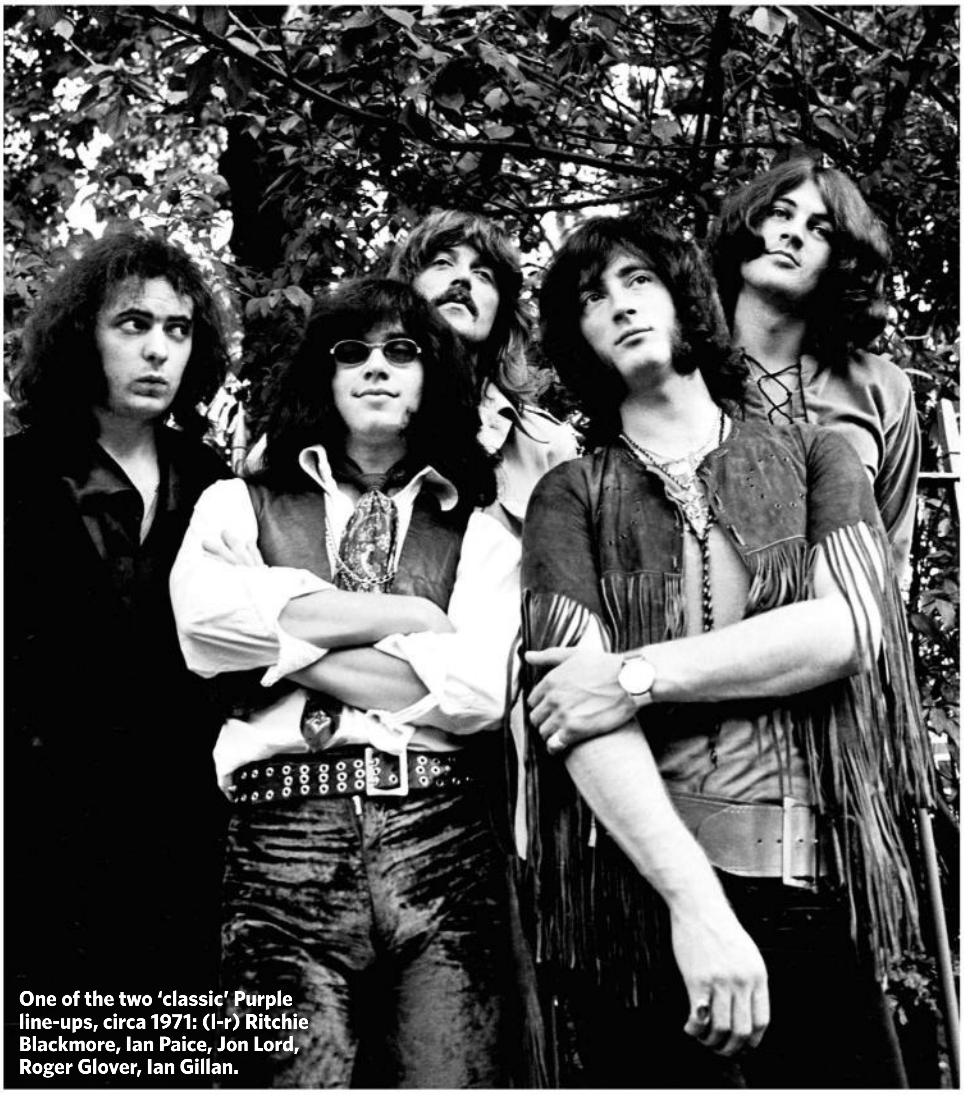
ROINE STOLT, THE FLOWER KINGS

"I remember seeing them play that song at the Roundhouse [in London] and thinking: 'Fucking hell, how did that geezer get right up there [to those top notes]?' Thanking about it now, it still makes my eyes water."

PHIL MOGG, UFO

"I think of it as their [equivalent of Uriah Heep's own] *July Morning*. There are some live versions that see Ritchie in absolutely stunning form. The interplay between him, Ian Gillan's voice and Jon Lord on the keyboards is unquestionable.

MICK BOX, URIAH HEEP



One of the two 'classic' Purple line-ups, circa 1971: (l-r) Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Roger Glover, Ian Gillan.

"I always loved *Child In Time*, probably because it has so many prog sensibilities. Jon Lord's keyboard playing is absolutely outstanding, plus the song's dynamics: the way it starts slowly and gently and then explodes, before whispering out again. It's so brilliantly written."

FISH

Speed King

(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

"I always liked Deep Purple, and my favourite album of theirs is *In Rock*. It has one classic song after another. They always used to come up with great riffs, and *Speed King* is hard to beat. It's a great, energetic song that shows every member of the band doing what they did best. Gillan's vocals and the keyboards of Jon Lord… They were such great musicians."

TONY IOMMI

"We liked it so much that we covered it on our album *Inspirations*. When Deep Purple wrote *Speed King*, I suspect they felt the way I did on the day I wrote *Motorcycle Man*. I wrote that in about thirty seconds. I had the chorus, wrote down the lyrics and never even bothered to go back and see whether they made any sense. *Speed King* is a great song but the lyrics – which reference Little Richard – sound like they were written in a bit of a hurry. Maybe Ian Gillan had had a drink or a smoke, I don't know. Gillan influenced me a lot because he didn't always use that slow, bluesy phrasing, he liked to scream."

BIFF BYFORD, SAXON

To me, *Speed King* and the *In Rock* album were the blueprint for what The Sweet aimed at. Don't believe me? Go and listen to Brian Connolly and company on *Sweet Fanny Adams*, which came out four years later. Both albums rocked hard. And Ian Gillan was about as good a rock singer as there's ever been. Majestic stuff!"

GREG HART, CATS IN SPACE

"I like that song *Speed King*. It does a lot in a very short amount of time. And Ritchie Blackmore is one of the coolest-looking guitar players around. He's like a sorcerer. I tip my wizard's hat to him."

PELLE ALMQVIST, THE HIVES

Bloodsucker

(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

Bloodsucker is a favourite of mine because, like all the best Deep Purple tunes, it's a collection of punishing blues riffs that struts super-hard and ▷

MAIN: CHRIS WALTER/GETTY; IOMMI: OLLY CURTIS

LIVE AT THE WILTERN
THE ROLLING STONES
INTIMATE 2002 CONCERT FROM THE WILTERN IN LOS ANGELES.
FEATURING HITS AND RARITIES INCLUDING "STRAY CAT BLUES", "NO EXPECTATIONS", "JUMPIN' JACK FLASH" & MORE.
SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE BY SOLOMON BURKE
AVAILABLE ON MULTIPLE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL FORMATS, INCLUDING LIMITED EDITION COLORED 3LP
ROLLINGSTONES.COM
Mercury
UNIVERSAL
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
STORE.MERCURYSTUDIOS.CO

The Who
1982
LIVE AT SHEA STADIUM
FIRST OFFICIAL AUDIO RELEASE OF THE FULL SHOW FROM SHEA STADIUM ON 13TH OCTOBER 1982.
INCLUDES "MY GENERATION", "PINBALL WIZARD", "SUBSTITUTE", "I CAN'T EXPLAIN" & MANY MORE!
FOR THE FIRST TIME AVAILABLE ON 3LP AND 2CD!
ALSO AVAILABLE: DVD & SD-BLU-RAY
THEWHO.COM
Mercury
UNIVERSAL
STORE.MERCURYSTUDIOS.CO

Deep Purple in their element circa 1973: on stage.

makes you feel super-tough. It also has a great trading section where Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord compete to see who has the biggest musical biceps. It's a little less driving than some of their other well-known tunes, but what it might lack in velocity it makes up for in groove. Just good old-fashioned hard rock mayhem."
SHAMUS CURRIE, THE SHEEPDOGS

Flight Of The Rat
(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

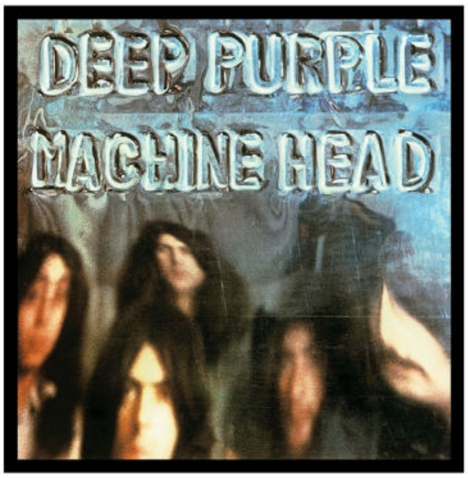
"I love it because it's as long as a Praying Mantis song – a few seconds short of eight minutes. Blackmore's riff is just amazing, also that little lick that he does at the end of the chorus. And then it just goes off into the stratosphere, all of the instrumental players just do their thing. It's like having a live album without being a live album. It's a really great tune."
TINO TROY, PRAYING MANTIS

Into The Fire
(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

"I have always loved Deep Purple, and touring with them [in 2015] was a dream come true. Oh my god, it blew my mind when Don Airey told me he was a fan of our band and he expected us to give Purple a run for their money. That was so rad. Both bands became fast friends.

"I could pick an obvious song like *Space Truckin'* but that's a bit cheap. I would like to pick *Smoke On The Water* because I got to play it on stage with them in London. My thirteen-year-old self would never have believed that was possible. But again it's *way* too obvious.

"So I'm going to go with something much deeper: *Into The Fire*, from *In Rock*. It's groovy but still mellow. Deep Purple never really get away from 'explosive', do they?"
SCOTT HOLIDAY, RIVAL SONS



Highway Star
(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"When I toured with Deep Purple [as a stand-in guitarist, from 1993-94], *Highway Star* was always the biggest thrill for me. The album version is a relentless, curiously swinging, high-energy song with some of the best ensemble playing the band has ever recorded. Everyone in the band shines brightly on this song. I think it was the first song I ever played with them at our one and only Japanese tour rehearsal. The first time we played it live, all I could think of was: 'How am I going to live up to Ritchie's freaky, symbiotic connection to Jon Lord's immense sound and groove?' It was impossible to emulate Ritchie's strange, overdubbed solo guitar harmonies live, but playing his main part always put smile on my face and made my heart pump a little faster –maybe a *lot* faster!"
JOE SATRIANI

"Wishbone Ash got our deal with Decca/MCA after Ritchie Blackmore recommended us to producer Derek Lawrence. Ritchie and I had jammed during a sound-check when we supported Purple at one of our earliest shows [Dunstable Civic Hall, November 10, 1969].

"I first saw them at the Windsor Jazz & Blues Festival in 1967, when they had a different lead singer [Rod Evans]. At the time they didn't feel like a band of the people, because they came on wearing frilly shirts. Then Ian Gillan came in, and to my mind there's only ever been one rock vocalist to beat him, and that's Arthur Brown. Just a few days ago I was listening to their current album, *Whoosh!* [2020]. Like us [Wishbone Ash], they're a band that's gone on and on and on.

"Although Deep Purple have a massive catalogue, it's very hard to beat *Highway Star*. It has a vibe that comes from the road. If, as has been claimed, they wrote it on the way to a gig, then that sums up the song's essence. They were thinking about beautiful young girls and driving along the road. If you're a young guy in a rock band thinking of eating up the miles down the motorway, then *Highway Star* will always put you in that head-space."
ANDY POWELL, WISHBONE ASH

"I like a bit of Deep Purple – or I used to. My mates at comprehensive school carried Led Zeppelin albums around under their arms, and the grammar-school boys all liked Deep Purple [laughs]. I had both.

"Picking a favourite is hard, but you've got to go with *Highway Star*. That one is fantastic. It's a bit punky, really, with the intro that goes: 'De de de de de de', and all those sound effects on it.

"But I also liked *Burn* and *Child In Time*. And what was the one that started with the sound of a lift? *Fireball*, yeah. I liked that one, too."
STEVE DIGGLE, BUZZCOCKS

"The only Deep Purple line-up that matters is Gillan-Blackmore-Glover-Lord-Paice. I was a fan of [original singer] Rod Evans with Captain Beyond, but that was just Deep Purple lite. Coverdale and Hughes than came in and had their moments, but the band was the band that wrote *In Rock, Machine Head* and *Who Do We Think We Are!*. *That* was fuckin' Deep Purple. And the best song of all was *Highway Star*. From the first not to the last it's absolutely perfect, in its structure, tonality and its attack. The vocals are unbelievable, and it has one of the greatest guitar solos of all time.

"You know, I've read that Purple wrote the song on the bus on the way to a show, and played it live for the first time that same night. That just cannot be true! Honestly, how could it be? Maybe they wrote some of it that day, but the song is structured to sheer perfection. The classical patterns of those keyboards still blow me away every time I hear it.

MAIN: DAVID WARNER ELLIS/GETTY; ANDY POWELL: JOSEPH BRANSTON; JOE SATRIANI: JOSEPH CULTICE/PRESS; DEE SNIDER: STEPHANIE CABRAL/PRESS; FRANCIS ROSSI: TINAKORHONEN/PRESS

"So many years later, I was thrilled when the song was introduced to a whole new generation of fans as part of the computer game *Rock Band*."
DEE SNIDER, TWISTED SISTER

IAN PAICE SAYS

"The story about *Highway Star* being written on the way to a gig is completely true – I think it may have been Portsmouth. We had a journo on the bus with us, and he was asking some quite banal questions, one of which was: 'How do you write a rock'n'roll tune?' Ritchie was sat next to him, and he took out a guitar and said: 'Just like this', and he played this [Ian hums the staccato opening riff]. It was as simple as that. Ritchie told the guy: 'That's all you've got to do.' And he went: 'Oh, right.'

"Did we play the song on stage the same night? Well, I think we played *something like it*, yeah, because what Ritchie had played sounded alright. In those days there were no recording devices in the crowd, and you could try songs out knowing they wouldn't go anywhere else. With good players you can create something on the fly, even with just a nod or a chord shape to keep things going. Obviously there were no real lyrics or melody lines, only Gillan screaming his head off with nods to old rock'n'roll tunes. But we took it into rehearsal, and that's when we realised we had the shell of an idea of a song."

Pictures Of Home

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

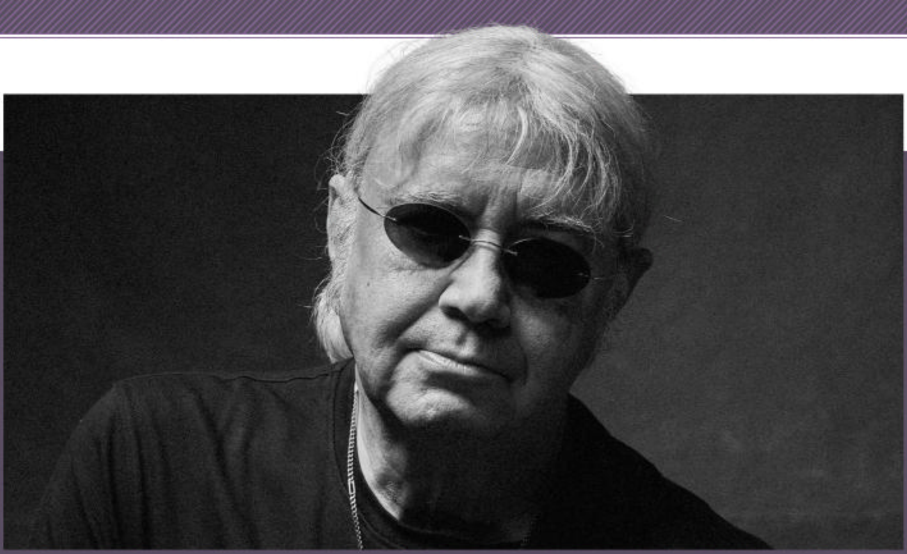
"*Machine Head* was the second album that I ever bought. For me, *Pictures Of Home* is the absolute perfect Deep Purple song. It's an awesome performance from a super-talented band. All four instrumentalists and singer Ian Gillan are individually on fire as well as working beautifully together. Ritchie Blackmore's unique style and sound inspired me to start practicing the guitar. Thank you, Ritchie. I still aspire to play with such flair."
BRIAN TATLER, DIAMOND HEAD/SAXON

"I really like Deep Purple, but I don't idolise them. The only artist I idolise is Jeff Lynne. All the same, Purple made some great albums, and I've known the band as guys since the days of [Gillan and Glover's pre-Purple band] Episode Six. Roger produced a single [*Wild Side Of Life*, 1976] for us. They are brilliant, just fantastic musicians. Just about any track from *Machine Head* will always be good, you really can't go wrong. Let's go with *Pictures Of Home*, shall we?"
FRANCIS ROSSI, STATUS QUO

IAN PAICE SAYS

"At first I wasn't sure about *Pictures Of Home* on *Machine Head*, but I know how much it works on stage now. I have a fun time with it, but I also enjoy knocking it out of the set for a couple of months. For me it's one of those slightly odd songs of ours." ▷

PAICE: BEN WOLF/PRESS



IAN PAICE

Eight faves from Purple's only ever-present member.

Highway Star

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"Not how it started in the studio, *Highway Star* became a monster on stage. And it's still a monster. It's almost like a template of how a hard rock band playing a rock'n'roll tune should be. It was really well-performed on the *Machine Head* record and the solos from Jon and Ritchie are incredibly interesting. The feel of the whole thing is so right."

Space Trucking

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"It came about when we tried to get Ritchie to play a Chuck Berry tune. He just wouldn't do it. Finally, under much duress, compromised by playing four to the bar, which made a sound that was really hard – really good. So we tried something a bit different for us. I went in and over the backing track I overdubbed my little dream feature in the middle. That worked out really well. There was no reason for it to be there, except that it was a nice idea and it sounded really good. I'm still proud of that drumming to this day."

Smoke On The Water

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"Obviously I had to include this one, due to its phenomenal success. It's a little harder to play [on stage] than people might think. If you get it wrong it's very trudge-y, but play it right and it has a has a buzz and a bounce. I tell drummers: 'It should have a little bounce, but it's not quite a shuffle. There should be a pulse to move it along. If you do that, it works."

Rat Bat Blue

(*Who Do We Think We Are!*, 1973)

"That's a great one. Don Airey told me that if you listen to it, even within the movement of the song, it ends just the way it began. It stays where it should be. Listen to the incredibly fast, double-speed [keyboard solo] played by Jon, and there's no real need for it to be there, just that we loved it."

Silver Tongue

(*Bananas*, 2005)

"Rhythmically, *Silver Tongue* is a great piece of music with an outstanding melody. I mean, it just rips. We've got a few of those songs in a similar vein on different records, where the star is the feel. That's when *I'm* coming from anyway."

Ted The Mechanic

(*Purpendicular*, 1996)

"A really good and an important song. [It was the opening track of the band's first album with Steve Morse on guitar.] It's got a very rhythmic feel, that double-tempo shuffle that I find quite easy to play but a lot of drummers struggle with. Then again, there are things that I find difficult that others can do with ease. It was a nice track to play on stage, too."

Any Fule Kno That

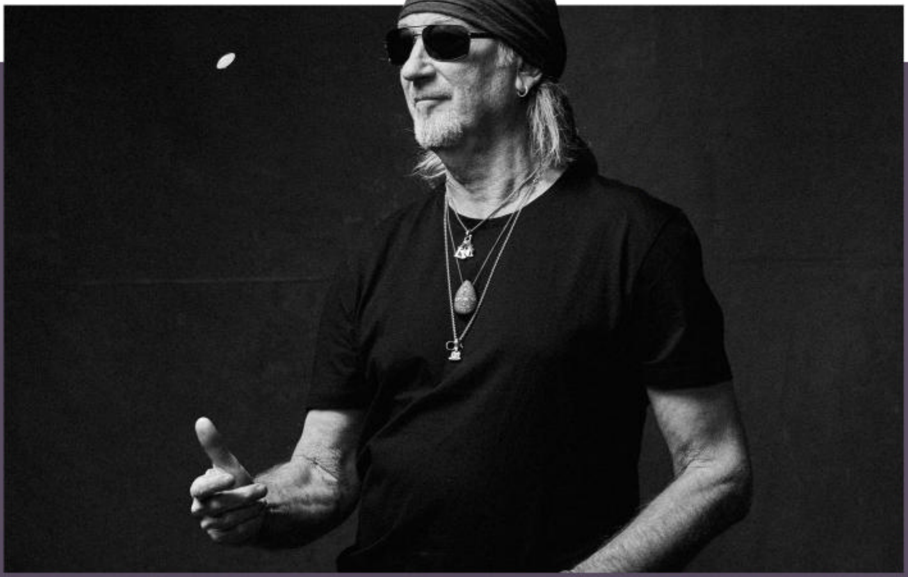
(*Abandon*, 1998)

"That was slightly unusual for us, with one of Gillan's weird titles [Ian also brought a spoken-word vibe to the verses, which some people saw as an attempt at rapping]. It sounded right. When I heard it back for the first time – what he'd done over the music – I thought it was wonderfully creative."

No Need To Shout

(*Whoosh!*, 2020)

"That song was very good, and as an album *Whoosh!* sticks together very well as an entity. For me as a drummer, there wasn't much to do, just to hold things tight and underpinning what the others did. Very simple, but hopefully it was effective."



ROGER GLOVER

One half of the rhythm section throws a seven.

Hard Lovin' Man

(*Deep Purple In Rock*, 1970)

"Unlike concert halls, studios are very dead spaces. But the live sound we got on stage changed the band; it made us animated and aggressive. We started making violent music. With *Hard Lovin' Man* there was no toning down, it was full-on. Even in the studio, Jon was still rocking his Hammond back and forth. That song was a breakthrough for us because it defined what we did on stage."

No One Came

(*Fireball*, 1971)

"The thing I liked about Sly & The Family Stone was that the bass always plays on the off-beat. We started messing around with that. I think Ritchie came up with the chords. Ian Gillan wrote a brilliant set of lyrics which presaged his life ahead. I don't think Ritchie liked the song very much because he wanted more melody, but *No One Came* was like rap before rap."

Space Truckin'

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"When I lived in America I turned on the car radio and heard this great song: really funky, but tough-sounding. I thought: 'This is fantastic.' It took me about ten seconds to realise it was *us* – the funky section with the jam between Paicey and Ritchie. I've never been able to see what other people liked about us. We had great success, but why? Suddenly I understood. I know that sounds strange."

Rat Bat Blue

(*Who Do We Think We Are!*, 1973)

"There's an old R&B song called, I think, *Watch Your Step*. I don't know whether Ritchie used that as a blueprint for *Rat Bat Blue*, but our song has got a great riff. The album was a difficult one to make but *Rat Bat Blue* blew me away."

Perfect Strangers

(*Perfect Strangers*, 1984)

"It has an unusual arrangement, based on a song of Ritchie's that he had tried out unsuccessfully a year or two earlier with Rainbow. At our first [post-reunion] jam together, we started jamming and it kicked – mostly because of Paicey, who has a feel unlike any other drummer. Even when he's playing hard rock he's a swing merchant. The segment when the riff goes down to an 'E' always blows me apart."

Loosen My Strings

(*Purpendicular*, 1996)

"One day at a studio in Orlando, I was early and changing strings, playing anything to see that I was in tune. Suddenly, a guitar started playing something that was completely different to what I'd done. I didn't even know that Steve was there. He suggested we do it over again in a song. *Loosen My Strings* is written from the view of a guitar to its owner."

Above And Beyond

(*Now What?!*, 2013)

"Above And Beyond means a lot to me because it was about Jon Lord, who died while we were making the album. *Uncommon Man* was another we wrote about Jon, whose memory permeates that entire album. Steve started playing this riff that was unimaginably good. Heavy as fuck, yet it goes into this beautiful song which Ian sings very well."

Never Before

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"I'm a bit of a weirdo with Deep Purple, because I came into them at a strange place. They weren't naturally one of 'my bands', because I was eight or nine when they formed and I was still listening to The Archies.

"My entry point was the *Fireball* album. I got it in Violet May's record shop [in Sheffield] for fifty pence. That album was the first thing of theirs I ever heard. But months later I bought *Machine Head* and *In Rock*. And from *Machine Head* I'm gonna go with *Never Before*. Trust me, I didn't pick that song because I did it once with Duff McKagan, Matt Sorum and Steve Stevens on the album *Re-Machined* [2012], I love it because – dare I say it – it's a pop-rock song. It isn't massively heavy or driven by the organ. No disrespect to Jon Lord, but in a parallel universe I always thought Purple to be a twin-guitar band. Imagine the riff to *Smoke On The Water* played on two guitars?

"Anyway, I'm picking *Never Before* because it has a great riff and great vocals. Ian Gillan always had a great way of telling stories, and this is an example of that."

JOE ELLIOTT, DEF LEPPARD

"Ian Gillan is among my favourite singers, and *Machine Head* got me into Deep Purple. From there I did my homework all the way back to *Hush*. But as a kid I always loved a deep cut called *Never Before*. Ritchie Blackmore is such a great guitarist, but there's no showing off here. *Never Before* is one of their most radio-friendly songs."

MICHAEL STARR, STEEL PANTHER

Smoke On The Water

(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"For me it has to be 'duh, duh, duh…' [he hums one of the most famous riff of all time]. I love it because it's great. The riff is great – everything about *Smoke On The Water* is great for a rock song. Am I not sick of it after all these years? No! I am choosing it because it's up there with the Steppenwolf song [*Born To Be Wild*] and [Scorpions'] *Rock You Like A Hurricane*. It's the essence of rock music."

RUDOLF SCHENKER, SCORPIONS

"In New Jersey there was a train that my mother would let me get on, that let you off right in Madison Square Garden. Deep Purple was the first concert I ever saw.

"I'd picked them up because of *Highway Star*, but *Smoke On The Water* was the standout track on the *Machine Head* album. And the impact of a song like that… Y'know, that riff was accessible for a young guitar student who was teaching himself how to play. If

JOE ELLIOTT: ROSS HALFIN/PRESS; GLOVER: BEN WOLF/PRESS; STEVE HARRIS: JOHN McMURTRIE/PRESS

you could play that riff, you could go to the school dance with your garage band and actually pull it off and be cool."
RICHIE SAMBORA

"I'm not what you'd call a stalker-collector, but I'm one of a handful of people to sing *Smoke On The Water* with Ian Gillan. We were on the Rock Meets Classic tour in Germany in 2015. There was John Wetton, me, Rick Parfitt, Marc Storace from Krokus, and the Italian singer Gianna Nannini, plus a power-metal band [Sinner] and a forty-piece orchestra.

"Each night, Ian finished the show with *Smoke*. I really wanted to sing the second verse, the one about Frank Zappa and The Mothers – I wanted him to say: 'Eric, you take this one.' Hey, I have an ego! So I went to his trailer to ask. His pretty blonde assistant invited me in but warned Ian was getting changed. Apparently he's a nudist. She opens the door, and there is Ian Gillan… hung like a Clydesdale horse. I'm thinking: 'So that's what elephantitis means.' We had this great conversation – with Ian completely naked. He didn't bat an eyelid.

"My plan worked perfectly. That night Ian said: 'Eric, you sing it.' And boy, *Smoke On The Water* sounded great with an orchestra. It's out there, check it on YouTube."
ERIC MARTIN, MR. BIG

"I always enjoyed Deep Purple since the first time I saw them, in Germany as a seventeen-year-old backing musician for Chris Farlowe. Ian Gillan is one of the best rock vocalists, he's extremely consistent, and Jon Lord was a fantastic composer, as confirmed by his exploits in the classical world.

"It's got to be *Smoke On The Water* for me, because that song was the first of the big riffs that gradually became so prevalent. It was a great driving song – you had to be careful getting in the car and putting on *Smoke On The Water*. The guitar solo is great as well."
CARL PALMER

"This is such difficult question. Firstly because Purple have so many great songs, and secondly because David Coverdale and Joe Lynn Turner, two of my favourite vocalists, sang in the band. Coverdale was amazing on *Burn*, and Joe was brilliant on *Slaves And Masters*.

"If I really have to choose just one song by Deep Purple, it has to be *Smoke On The Water* all day long. It's the classic Deep Purple line-up with Ritchie Blackmore and Ian Gillan, and such a legendary song that set the scene and inspired so many rock bands. Plus Ian Paice, Roger Glover, and of course Jon Lord on keys… What's not to love?"
DARREN WHARTON, DARE/THIN LIZZY

IAN PAICE SAYS

"People always ask whether after so many times down the years I'm sick to death of playing *Smoke On The Water*. If we played it the same every night, yeah, I would be. But I'm not. We [as a band] have gone through so many permutations, but I've arrived at a template. It's almost become like a scored piece of music; you can even change the tempo by a beat or two. Yes, it's similar [to what has come before], but it's just for that particular night. It's never quite the same."

***'Smooowke, on the waaaater…'* Ian Gillan on fire in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1972.**

MAIN: JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS

Lazy

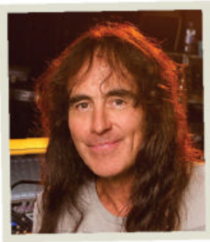
(*Machine Head*, 1972)

"When Aerosmith first started out we lived in an apartment together. This was right when *Machine Head* came out, and that album was on the record player so much we almost wore it out. I really loved *Lazy*. It was such a statement. The song's beginning was so deceptive, you had no idea what was coming. It builds and builds and builds, and then all of a sudden Ritchie Blackmore enters the picture. It keeps on delivering those surprises, and when the words come in you just think: 'Holy cow.' *Lazy* is an epic song, and it never, ever gets old."
BRAD WHITFORD, AEROSMITH

"*Machine Head* is my favourite album, and I love the tracks *Never Before* and *Highway Star*, but probably one of my fave all-time tracks is *Lazy*. It starts off with an impromptu jam and then mutates into a super-cool smokin' groove . Epic stuff! The playing just feels so good; it's something that's becoming lost these days within so many bands using editing, ProTools and computer trickery.

"I was once in a karaoke bar in Japan with my in-laws, and picked *Highway Star* as the track, and I started singing it. About halfway through, I realised just how high the vocal was becoming and everyone was laughing at me in the bar. And it was about five minutes long. A bit of an epic fail. I had to drown myself in sushi and sake to nurse my wounds.
ACE, SKUNK ANANSIE

Machine Head, 1972



"It's impossible for me to choose my favourite Deep Purple track. I grew up listening to *Machine Head* and *Made In Japan*. They were such important records for me. I mean, *Machine Head* alone has *Smoke On The Water*, *Highway Star* and *Space Truckin'* on it. And then you get to hear those tracks, and more, as live versions on the *Made In Japan* album, and they're even bigger. Purple were such a powerful band, with great songwriting and performances, both in the studio and in concert. They were definitely an influence for all of us in Maiden, in our different ways."
STEVE HARRIS, IRON MAIDEN

"I can't pick just one song – it's got to be the whole of *Machine Head*. I always loved those über-chunky riffs, the keyboards that drove the machine without smothering it in cheese, a pounding rhythm section, and those awesome vox and blistering leads. It had all of the ingredients to propel a thirteen-year-old kid – me – into a blissful life of rebellion. The *Machine Head* album was one of the main catalysts in my future musical endeavours. Long live Deep Purple!"
AL JOURGENSEN, MINISTRY

Fasten your seat belts: Glenn Hughes, Ian Paice, David Coverdale, Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord with their plane on the 1974 US tour.

Child In Time (Live)

(*Made In Japan*, 1972)

"My choice can be very close to being a two-way tie – I love *Burn* almost as much. But I'm going to go with *Child In Time*.

As a song it's painfully simple, but it's also devastating. The live version on *Made In Japan* is even more devastating. At the beginning it just simmers, and Gillan just kills it on the vocals. And then it kicks in to show what the band can do – everybody gets their chance at that. I can only think of two bands in that style that retained their popularity after replacing lead singers: Van Halen with David Lee Roth and Sammy Hagar, and then Purple transitioning into the years with David Coverdale and Glenn [Hughes]. Those personnel changes are so hard to pull off.

"I believe it's retired from the set, which is no real surprise. I'm not sure how old Ian Gillan is; maybe he's like Glenn, seventy-one or seventy-two? [*He's seventy-eight – Ed.*] But imagine having to repeat a trapeze highwire act that you could pull off at twenty-two, fifty years later. There's no shame in that [dropping it from the show].

"Listen, you want to hear *Child In Time*? Go to *Made In Japan*, it's track number two."

JOE BONAMASSA

Lazy (Live)

(*Made In Japan*, 1972)

The first album I got was *Fireball*, at the age of eight. The title track is so amazing, and it doesn't even have a guitar solo. But I also love *Speed King*. I'm a bit unusual in that I love the album *Machine Head*, but I got *Made In Japan* first, so it's the live versions of those songs that I prefer. When I heard the studio versions they sounded a little tame – great, obviously, but still a little lame.

"For that reason I'm going to go with that incredible version of *Lazy* from *Made In Japan*. But I've also got to mention *Demon's Eye* [from *Fireball*], and *Fireball* itself. Also *Speed King*, and *Pictures Of Home*, *Child In Time* [laughs]… just about all of them, basically.

"Purple's music from that early era had such a great impact upon me. I grew up in a country [Sweden] that had no radio, TV or video – this was in the seventies. Before hearing Purple, the only thing I knew was John Mayall's *Bluesbreakers*, which my mother had on cassette and I loved. The first time I heard that double bass drum [imitates the intro to *Fireball*] it was like a fucking meteor flew into the side of my house. You have to understand that during that era that was zero rock'n'roll in Sweden. Then I got *In Rock*, which was fucking insane. My life was changed."

YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

"I've always loved the version of *Lazy* that appeared on the double live album *Made In Japan*. It's a great showcase for the depth of musicianship of the Mk II line-up. It's pretty much a jam. After a quick tune-up there's a spectacular ring modulated organ solo, followed by some guitar noodling hinting at the riff to come. Then the jam starts for real and it is just so exciting. There's even a little humour injected at one point. The fact that Purple had been playing together non-stop for so long is evident in how tight this all feels."

BEN MATTHEWS, THUNDER

Space Truckin' (Live)

(*Made In Japan*, 1972)

"I grew up a massive fan of Deep Purple, and like so many musicians the first riff I learned was *Smoke On The Water*. Later on, Airbourne supported them, which was an incredible honour.

"I'm not going to pick *Smoke*, I'm going with *Space Truckin'* – but it's got to be the long version from *Made In Japan*. It took up a whole side of vinyl. What a fucking incredible piece of music."

JOEL O'KEEFFE, AIRBOURNE

Woman From Tokyo

(*Who Do We Think We Are!*, 1973)

"*Woman From Tokyo* was the first time I ever heard distorted Hammond organ and distorted guitar doing two different things while working together. For a long time I tried to reverse-engineer that. I first attempted it on our second album, and I think I got close on our third album, where there's lots of Hammond and lots of guitar, and they're both complementing each other. These are two mid-range instruments that are kind of purposed to do the same thing. If you can work them into a song with that kind of thickness and without them masking each other and becoming a mess, that's the trick. I think Deep Purple got that right first among all heavy rock bands."

BRENDAN B BROWN, WHEATUS

MAIN: FIN COSTELLO/GETTY; JOE BONAMASSA: ELEANOR JANE/PRESS

Burn

(*Burn*, 1974)

"There are a lot of bands I've appreciated but not necessarily embraced, and Purple was one of those bands. They were not my cup of tea. I knew they were great players, but they just didn't connect with me emotionally. I admitted that to David Coverdale when we met.

"I preferred what they did when David and Glenn came in, as opposed to the Ian Gillan years. *Burn* was the pinnacle of what I liked about them. The lead singing was great, and that vocal interplay between David and Glenn was very special. I appreciated the songwriting more. The first time I heard the song *Burn*, it was almost cinematic. I thought it was really great."

PAUL STANLEY, KISS

"Ritchie Blackmore was my first guitar hero – he had that white Stat and was so cool. Like every clichéd young guitar player, the first song I worked out was *Smoke On The Water*. But I would say *Burn* is my favourite. The riff was just killer. The singing was so great. Actually, just a couple of days ago I was on YouTube watching Chad Smith do *Burn* with Glenn Hughes in some club, and I was gonna text him and say: 'That was the third song I ever learnt on guitar, when I was eleven years old.'"

MIKE McCREADY, PEARL JAM

"There are a dozen songs of theirs that I could choose, but *Burn* is so great. Obviously the riff is what makes the song stand out, but I love how up-tempo it is. I adore the way that Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord go back and forth, plus the vocal interaction between David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes. *Burn* is such an epic track. It shows off everything that I love so much about Deep Purple."

SCOTT IAN, ANTHRAX

"The first Deep Purple song I listened to was *Burn*. I was still a kid and completely new to that whole kind of music. I fell in love with *Burn* due to the combination of the song and the two lead vocalists, Coverdale and Hughes, who were surprisingly great. I wasn't used to that. And then came the classically themed middle part of ▷

HUGHES: JOBY SESSIONS; STANLEY: JEN ROSENSTEIN

GLENN HUGHES

Purple's 'other' bassist's hot half-dozen. (He sang a bit too.)

Burn

(*Burn*, 1974)

"We were at Clearwell Castle when Ritchie said: 'We should write song called *Burn*.' He had the idea of the title already. The five of us wrote that song together in the Castle's crypt in the key of 'G'; Jon's Bach instrumental, inserting the riff… it felt magical. *Burn* is such a great, dramatic rock track. It stops, starts, turns around, and there's the Bach influence and vocal harmonies. It was completely different to anything that Deep Purple had ever done before. It ticked all the boxes of those that questioned whether the new line-up could work."

You Can't Do It Right (With The One You Love)

(*Stormbringer*, 1974)

"Ritchie was probably thinking about leaving even before we started making *Stormbringer*, so he didn't arrive with a lot of material. Jon, David and I wrote some songs that were quite different for Purple – very different, in fact. This one was a great vehicle for David and I to do our vocal duet thing."

Love Don't Mean A Thing

(*Stormbringer*, 1974)

"Ritchie later referred to our songs as 'shoeshine music', but it's important for me to state that he played *so well* on them. I do know that Ritchie wanted Mk III of Purple to be a different genre than Mk II, so whether or not *Stormbringer* was shoeshine music, well… I guess he got his wish. And by the way, the band played so well on these particular songs."

Sail Away

(*Burn*, 1974)

"We were still at Clearwell Castle,and it may have been the second or third song for the album. For me, having been in Trapeze, I very much identified with the song's sense of groove. To this day I still love singing and playing it."

This Time Around/ Owed To A 'G'

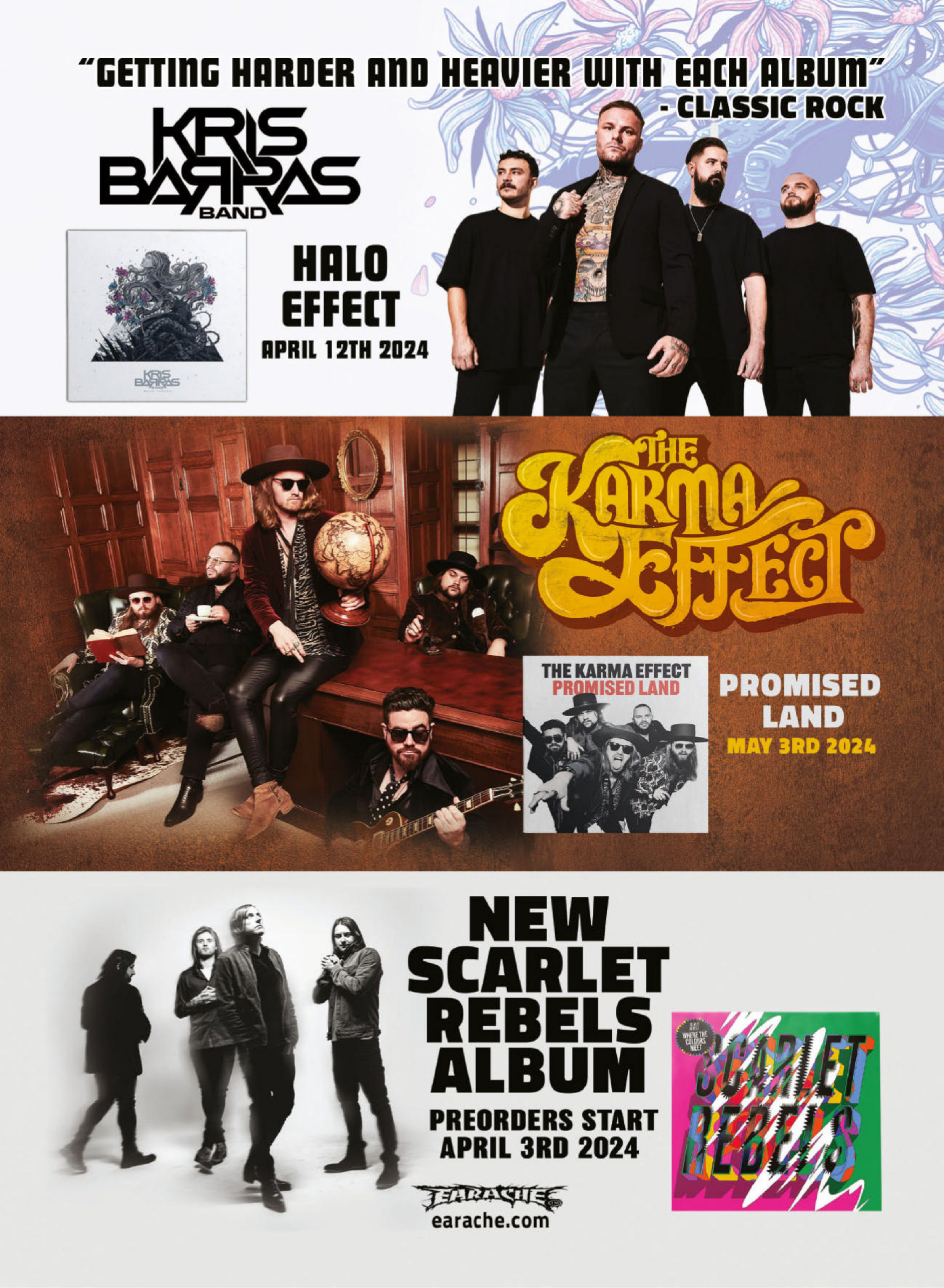
(*Come Taste The Band*, 1975)

"For *Come Taste The Band*, my brother Tommy Bolin had replaced Ritchie. Jon and I wrote *This Time Around* alone in the studio in the early hours of the morning. Jon was playing this really cool movement and I started to sing along. I had no idea of the lyrics, they just tumbled out. The song wrote itself in half an hour. We got Martin [Birch, producer] out of bed to make a demo, and the following day we recorded it. My beautiful moment with Jon which led to the song is something I will cherish forever."

Gettin' Tighter

(*Come Taste The Band*, 1975)

"*Come Taste The Band* was written at my home. Tommy was living with me at the time. We took it to the rest of the guys and they loved it. I still play it as a homage to Tommy. In fact it's the only one of my legacy songs with Purple that I have played at every concert since December 4, 1976 [the date on which Tommy Bolin died of a heroin overdose at just 25 years old]."


"GETTING HARDER AND HEAVIER WITH EACH ALBUM"
- CLASSIC ROCK
KRIS BARRAS BAND
HALO EFFECT
APRIL 12TH 2024
THE KARMA EFFECT
THE KARMA EFFECT
PROMISED LAND
PROMISED LAND
MAY 3RD 2024
NEW SCARLET REBELS ALBUM
PREORDERS START APRIL 3RD 2024
EARACHE
earache.com
WHERE THE COLOURS MEET
SCARLET REBELS

Blackmore and Jon Lord. That became a big, big inspiration for me and I never forgot the moment."
MAT SINNER, PRIMAL FEAR

"It's hard for me to not pick *Smoke On The Water*, which has the most iconic guitar riff of all time, but *Burn* is right up there as well. It has so many different ingredients, delivered by the voice of rock. No, make that *two* voices of rock: Hughes and Coverdale. *Burn* is just insane."
DAVID DRAIMAN, DISTURBED

"It's got to be *Burn*, for two reasons. Firstly, Purple were touring that album when I saw them for the first time, at the Capitol in Cardiff in 1974. That gig blew my bloody head off. They opened with *Burn*. It's such an incredible song. Which brings me to my second point. Coverdale's isolated vocals are out there on the internet, and they're really something else. The whole band is off the scale, guitar, keyboards, bass and drums. It's just a slamming hard rock song."
PHIL CAMPBELL, PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS

"I first heard Deep Purple when I was seven years old, on my dad's record player, and their sound has greatly influenced the way I write songs. *Burn* drew me into the rock world with its energy and raw power. When I had the opportunity to support Glenn Hughes on tour a few years ago, he played *Burn* at the end of his set. Watching him perform it live with the band was so memorable. Deep Purple's classic guitar riffs, tones and solos, played by real musicians in the old-school way, is completely timeless."
LAURENCE JONES

"*Burn* was the second Deep Purple track I heard after *Smoke On The Water*, and it blew me out of the water. I was instantly floored by Ian Paice's drumming, which is out of the blocks! As a young drummer I couldn't work out what was being played – so many fills! It's absolute madness and was so inspiring. As the song progresses, everyone in the band shines in their own way. The bass and keys parts are amazing, and Blackmore's guitar solo is unbelievable, while Coverdale's vocals are off chain. The main riff of the song is so hooky too. Love it!
ARYA GOGGIN, SKINDRED

IAN PAICE SAYS

"*Burn* is one of those songs that I tend to forget about, because I don't play it very often for obvious reasons [it was recorded by the Mk III line-up with David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes]. I can only play it when I'm working with friends in covers and heritage bands.

"We were [writing the album] at Clearwell Castle and Ritchie had this riff. We kept on playing it [as the song was developed], and I was getting bored shitless: 'C'mon, guys… where is this going?' Every time we reached the verse, things would fall to pieces. I just started soloing, in time, flapping around the kit, and everybody loved it and we moved on, and that was crucial.

"When we recorded the song, I think I did it in three takes. The first was absolute chaos, the second was the master [that was used], and with the third I said I thought I could do it better. But I couldn't. Is the version on the album perfect? No. But then again it *is* perfect – it captured the moment perfectly. The drums are totally mad, but again… it works. That's the glory of rock'n'roll – it breaks all the rules. Though now it seems those rules are being put back in place again, more's the pity. Stop limiting your options."

Slide into it: Ritchie Blackmore giving it some bottle during Purple's 1974 US tour.

FIN COSTELLO/GETTY

Sail Away

(*Burn*, 1974)

"What a groove. What a riff. And the vocals, shared between David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes, are just awesome. *Burn* has always been my favourite album by Deep Purple, and *Sail Away* is its best track."
JONA TEE, H.E.A.T

IAN PAICE SAYS

"I always loved *Sail Away*. It came from us [as a band] trying to get Ritchie's take on *Superstition* [by Stevie Wonder, released two years earlier]. We wanted that very angular riff, to convey a similar mood. A lot of people didn't get it at the time because it was too funky. No, it wasn't rock'n'roll, but I loved the song's feel."

Mistreated

(*Burn*, 1974)

"*Mistreated* really resonates with me because the style of it reminded me of bands like Free and Bad Company. My favourite incarnation of Deep purple was the MK III line-up with David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes. As a teenager, me and King King bassist Zander Greenshields spent many a late night watching the 1974 California Jam concert, and it wasn't until years later that I realised how much that show influenced me. Coverdale's voice on *Mistreated* reminds me of Paul Rodgers. They have similar phrasing and such raw power, it's amazing."
ALAN NIMMO, KING KING

"It's weird, because before I heard the real version of *Mistreated* [by Deep Purple], I knew it as a song played by Ritchie Blackmore and Ronnie James Dio on the Rainbow live record [*On Stage*, 1977]. I thought it was brilliant, but I mistook it for a Rainbow song. I was just a kid, collecting records.

"I knew all about Deep Purple at the time, but I had not got into the Mk III line-up yet. When I heard the real version, featuring Glenn and David, along with Jon and Ritchie and Paicey, my appreciation kicked up to a whole other level."

"Many years later I got to play *Mistreated* many times on stage with Glenn, and the coolest thing was that it was never the same. Glenn makes that song special and different every time he plays it. I also went to see him play it with Søren [Andersen, guitarist] on his Classic Deep Purple tour. Basically, every one of those versions were so good they should have been freeze-framed as a unique moment in time."
DOUG ALDRICH, THE DEAD DAISIES

IAN PAICE SAYS

"Another of those songs sung by Coverdale, I always enjoy playing *Mistreated* when I get the chance. It's not a complex song, it's just interesting. The point of any song is not how clever you make it, but whether or not it's a good piece of music, and *Mistreated* is definitely one of those."

A laugh a minute at a photo session in Hamburg, Germany, September 1984.

Drifter

(*Come Taste The Band*, 1975)

"*Drifter* has that laid-back funky groove, yet the song still retains a serious rock energy, throwing in that double-time here and there and on the ending. It's a great track all round. An example of early funk-rock right there!"
DAN REED, DAN REED NETWORK

GLENN HUGHES SAYS

"*Drifter* is a great, funky romp, and *Come Taste The Band* a wonderful, very different album. Each of the albums David and I did with Purple were different. *Burn* had been classic-sounding, but with Ritchie edging away, with *Stormbringer* we moved on. And then by *Come Taste The Band* there were three new guys. Just like we hadn't wanted to duplicate *Machine Head* with *Burn*, nobody sought to duplicate *Burn* on *Stormbringer*. As David [Bowie] constantly told me, a great band or artist must keep on changing."

The Gypsy

(*Stormbringer*, 1974)

"To pick a ballad as my favourite song by Deep Purple, a band with no shortage of genre-defining heavy riffs, could be considered sacrilegious, but *Stormbringer* is my favourite of the band's albums, and *The Gypsy* is a wonderful piece of music.

"In addition to the beautiful vocal harmonising of David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes throughout, and Ian Paice's masterful drumming, particularly in the long fade-out, you get what I think is one of Ritchie Blackmore's finest moments in his sublime harmonised slide solo – not to mention Jon Lord's gentle but evocative keyboard accompaniment underneath."

"So yes, although there are plenty of other worthy, heavier choices, which I'm sure will be represented here, for me *The Gypsy* is the winner."
JIM MATHEOS, FATES WARNING

Soldier Of Fortune

(*Stormbringer*, 1974)

"What a beautiful, beautiful song. *Soldier Of Fortune* is so brilliantly put together by Coverdale and Blackmore. After Mama's Boys, I now teach as well as make my own music, and when I play that song to my students they are always blown away. When you've got a younger generation going around and singing *Solider Of Fortune*, that's a beautiful thing. When you can go from a song like *Burn* to a tender ballad like *Soldier Of Fortune*, it shows what amazingly versatile musicians Deep Purple were, and remain."
PAT McMANUS, MAMA'S BOYS

GLENN HUGHES SAYS

"As I remember, *Soldier Of Fortune* came together while *Stormbringer* was being recorded at Musicland Studio in Germany;I don't think we had it at The Castle [Clearwell]. *Soldier Of Fortune* was born in a moment between David and Ritchie, a bit like the one between Jon Lord and myself [that led to *This Time Around*]. I consider it one of David's best ever vocal performances. It's testament to how great his voice was at that period, especially in a lower register."

Wring That Neck (Live)

(*Deep Purple In Concert*, 1980)

"My first album of theirs was a double album of tracks recorded live for the BBC [in 1970 and '72]. I had a really long version of *Wring That Neck* that took up most of the first side. I loved that, because Ritchie Blackmore and Jon Lord

MAIN: GEORGE BODNAR ARCHIVE/ICONICPIX; STEVEN WILSON: HAJO MUELLER/PRESS

went head-to-head in battle for almost twenty minutes. I fucking loved to hear those guys blowing away. Together and apart they were phenomenal musicians – great tone, great sound, great players and great feel. I'm going to go with *Wring That Neck* live as a somewhat obscure but very genuine choice."
STEVEN WILSON

Perfect Strangers

(*Perfect Strangers*, 1984)

"That sustained intro from Jon Lord, and when Ian Paice's drum beat kicks in… Woah, what a brilliant song. I'm a long-term Deep Purple fan, and of Ritchie Blackmore in particular. They're a band that we in Queensrÿche listened to a lot in our formative years. Their playing is always brilliant and they made so many timeless, classic albums."
MICHAEL WILTON, QUEENSRŸCHE

"I consider *Perfect Strangers* one of Deep Purple's most mature and finest works. It embodies all of the most positive aspects of the band. It has a great riff, and the lyrics are very poignant because they were talking about themselves.

"At that point Deep Purple were playing in Australia, as were we [Jethro Tull], and I met them at a hotel in Sydney. [Having just reunited] there was a great sense of unease. I remember taking to Ian Gillan at the hotel bar, and as soon as Ritchie walked in he vanished. They didn't really communicate. I went to see them play, and there was a major tantrum on stage, Ritchie got really upset about something and smashed his guitar.

"My perception of Ritchie is that behind all of the bravado he's a bit of a sensitive soul. He's quite tormented because, musically speaking, his ambitions always lay in something that was far beyond the remit of Deep Purple. And of course he finally achieved that after finding a partner in the rather unusual form of Candice Night. I played on their first album [*Shadow Of The Moon*, 1997], and was happy to see that Blackmore's Night gave Richie a whole new direction in life. It all worked out in the end."
IAN ANDERSON, JETHRO TULL

Deep Purple 1995 vintage: (clockwise from top left) Ian Gillan, Jon Lord, Ian Paice, Steve Morse, Roger Glover.

ROGER GLOVER SAYS

"Ian and I used bits and pieces of poetry to write those lyrics. We had an idea about a soul being reborn and being trapped in a new body. The other person knows you're there, but they can't do anything about it. It sounds strange, but it *is* strange. It was only when the song was finished that we realised it is about Deep Purple."

Sometimes I Feel Like Screaming

(*Purpendicular*, 1996)

I'm a big fan of Purple's era with Steve Morse. Blackmore was a huge influence, but I wouldn't call myself a purist. *Purpendicular*, their first album with Morse, was the best since *Burn*, and *Sometimes I Feel Like Screaming* is as good as any they ever wrote. Morse brought new life to the band, and it sounds like the boys had to up their game for the first time in a while, creatively as songwriters and technically as musicians. This song flows in a way that makes it seem like it fell from the sky as a finished piece. Gillan's abstract yet engaging lyrics blend melody with those screams, fitting perfectly over Paicey and Glover's swinging rhythm. It's classic Purple.

"The star of the show is the beautiful guitar hook, featured over Jon Lord's meandering cadence. Morse is tasteful and restrained, but he allows just enough of his technical prowess to break through; confident yet respectful to the Purple sound. Those were not easy shoes to fill, but Steve brought the band back to the top.

"*Purpendicular* has many such tunes – *Ted The Mechanic, Somebody Stole My Guitar* – but *Sometimes* is the sound of five stellar musicians bringing the best out of each other. Flawless!"
ADAM THISTLETHWAITE, MASSIVE WAGONS

ROGER GLOVER SAYS

"*Purpendicular* was one of those albums that, to me, was perfect. It was a magical time. We couldn't stop writing, and in a whole different way than we'd done with Ritchie in the band. We reinvented ourselves – in the same way as we're now doing with Simon [McBride]."

MAIN: GEORGE CHIN/ICONICPIX; IAN ANDERSON: WILL IRELAND

THE CLASSIC ROCK INTERVIEW

SHERYL CROW

Artist. Activist. Grammy winner. Superstar. Cancer survivor… As she airs her most socially charged songs yet on twelfth album *Evolution*, she looks back on the battles, triumphs, hardships, hopes and achievements that mark out her winding road.

Interview: **Henry Yates**

It's difficult to believe we've had the pleasure of Sheryl Crow's company for three decades now – not least to the singer-songwriter herself. "I'll be honest with you, I don't know if anybody ever really feels their age," she considers. "I mean, I'm sixty-two and I need to get my lips done, I need to get a little facelift. But unless I'm looking in a mirror, mentally I feel like I'm about thirty-six."

Talking in the music room of her home in rural Nashville, sitting in front of a rack of vintage acoustic guitars befitting the queen of heartland roots rock, Crow is everything we need right now from our rock stars. Witty, articulate, informed and inquisitive, she is nobody's vacuous pin-up. She has opinions: on gun control, climate change, military conflict, the Presidential election, the insidious rise of AI and what it might mean for her two teenage sons. Ask her and she'll talk about all of it (the only subjects we're told are off the table today are her shift in the 80s singing backing vocals for Michael Jackson's *Bad* tour, and her much raked-over split from disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong). That readiness to stand up and be counted came from her formative years, she says, still talking with a Midwest drawl.

"One of the very first things [jingles] I did was for McDonald's. I had to impersonate a singing cow."

Sheryl Crow was born on February 11, 1962 in Kennett, the largest city of the so-called Missouri Bootheel. A classic overachieving middle child, her prolific contribution to life at Kennett High School saw her compete as an all-state track athlete and join the National Honor Society. But it was the combination of her parents' politics and her musical talents that set her path.

Your biog makes you sound like the dream teenager – sporty, clever, popular…

Oh, I was perfect [laughs]. No, I was a people pleaser. I think I wanted my parents to really like me. It was all about making good grades, being in student council and the Honor Society. I felt like love was attached to being good, being smart, being liked. Years of therapy had to un-ingrain [the idea] that love is not attached to anything. That everybody deserves to be loved, whether or not you get Fs in school and smoke weed. That love is not something you earn. And I don't fault my parents for that. I took on that persona and I ran with it until I was famous. At a certain point, you realise: "Wait a minute, I can stand up here in front of a hundred and eighty thousand people at a festival and walk away not feeling loved. What's wrong with me? Do I not feel ▷

Crow and Michael Jackson during his 1987-89 Bad Tour, on which she was a backing vocalist.

At the 1997 Grammys, where she picked up the Best Female Rock Vocal Performance award for *If It Makes You Happy*.

Class acts: Crow and Stevie Nicks at the 2010 Grammys in LA.

"After I came off the Michael Jackson tour, I played for everybody. Everybody was hoping I was going to be Madonna or Paula Abdul."

like I'm deserving?" So I was a good kid. But then when I hit my thirties I let it all hang out. I'd been a pretty good girl up until then – then the partying started.

Looking back now, how would you describe your parents?
They were musical and they played together in a swing band on the weekends. I think my dad really would have liked to have been a professional musician, but he got his degree in law and he was a very Atticus Finch [figure], very much about the judicial system. My mom was always an activist. When I was growing up in the late sixties there was a lot of racial and social unrest, and she'd be active in church and taking care of older people. I think you model to your kids how you see the world, and that was so much in my DNA. My dad was a conservative and my mom was a liberal, so I grew up with them having strong debates about politics. That also informed me about the way the world should look.

As a kid, when did it become obvious that music would be your road?
I have vivid memories of my mom and dad having friends over. They'd be drinking and they'd be like: "Come here and play that James Taylor song for everybody!" And I'd be like: "Ah, I don't wanna do that!" I can actually remember playing *My Love* by Paul McCartney – and my dad being so angry. That was my first bit of censorship. He's like: "Do you know what that song means, young lady?" And I was like: "No, I don't know what it means, dad – I'm twelve." I remember being the sort of party trick as a kid. Y'know, bring her out and have her play something on piano.

When did the wider world realise that you had a talent?
When I got to the University Of Missouri and started playing keyboard in bands, I started getting noticed more. But I did not ever want to be a frontperson. I remember my college professor saying that I was never going to be a great classical pianist, because I could play pieces by ear. He said: "You will be a great pop player, but you will never make it in the classical world." And I knew that. I knew the dedication it took to be a concert pianist was definitely squashed by the fact I could play the piece relatively okay after hearing it a few times.

Even after graduating college, there was no indication of the heights to come, with Crow working as a music teacher, gigging on the weekends and recording a string of sometimes banal but often lucrative advertising jingles. By 1987, it seemed her best hope might be fame by association, with Michael Jackson's *Bad* tour seeing her duet with him on *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*.

But, as she remembers today, Crow craved a career on her own terms. She moved to Los Angeles in her late twenties to shop her material around, before falling in with the West Coast songwriting collective who performed on (and inspired the name of) her 1993 solo debut *Tuesday Night Music Club*.

You worked on some advertising jingles. Which was the strangest one you did?
One of the very first things [jingles] I did was for McDonald's, and I had to impersonate a singing cow. I had to do several different voices, singing 'Ee-i-ee-i-o'. It was for a campaign where you'd get a toy farm animal with the Happy Meal.

Why do you think you weren't satisfied just being a jobbing musician?
I don't know if I was dissatisfied. I think I just always had a burning desire to be [more]. And I'm sure it has to do with my upbringing. I grew up listening to artists who for me were important. I remember listening to great songwriters and rock stars, from Fleetwood Mac to Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, Carole King, Elton John, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell. That's what I wanted to be. I wanted to write important things, and I wanted to be important. I didn't want to just be good – I wanted to write music that mattered. Everything else was just something that led up to that.

How did you feel as a newcomer in Los Angeles when you moved there?
The first thing I did was pick up a *Thomas Guide* map and get a book of all the studios in the greater Los Angeles area. Then I took my demo tape to every single one and said will you please ask whoever to listen to this. I was very naïve. The city looked giant to me. I'd only been there once before. Suddenly I'm there, driving my

MAIN: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY; TOP: VINNIE ZUFFANTE/GETTY; BOTTOM: RICK DIAMOND/GETTY

Posing for a portrait for the New Faces section of *Rolling Stone* magazine, August 1993.

"I wanted to be great. I wanted to write great music, I wanted to be the best musician I could be, I wanted to be important."

own car, I don't know where anything is, I don't know anybody. It felt huge and glamorous and full of rich people. I'd never seen Rolls-Royces and Mercedes before. I'd see these huge homes everywhere, then I went and crawled into my tiny studio apartment. Once you're there for a while, the chasm between the wealthy and very-not-wealthy becomes not only overwhelming but really depressing. But I mean, I just figured it out.

Every artist has horror stories of being rejected by record labels. Did that happen to you, and what reasons did they give?
Oh, after I came off the Michael Jackson tour I played for everybody. I think, because of the notoriety of that tour, everybody was hoping I was going to be Madonna or Paula Abdul. And I didn't want to be those. I wanted to be more like Stevie Nicks or Linda Ronstadt, and that wasn't what was 'it'. So I got a lot of development deal offers, but everybody turned me down.

Finally you got signed to A&M Records. But in 1992 your debut album was shelved. How devastating was that for a young artist?
Well it wasn't devastating, because I didn't want them to put it out. I was the one who went to them and said: "I feel like this isn't the right record. I have one shot, and if this comes out, then I'll be done." To A&M's credit, they did not put it out – they ate the four hundred thousand dollars. But I sat around for quite a long time, and started hearing that I was about to be dropped. And at that time I fell in with Bill Bottrell, and started making the *Tuesday Night Music Club* record. By the time I made that first record I was twenty-eight. Y'know, I can remember the Rolling Stones saying to me: "If you're thirty-five in rock'n'roll, you're not in rock'n'roll any more".

Do you remember the first time you performed live under your own name?
It was at this club just south of LA. I was opening for John Hiatt, who was pretty big at the time. Even though I had a band, and I'd been playing some gigs, this was the first full-length gig. I invited the guys from the Tuesday Night Music Club to come sit in. And we were terrible – and John Hiatt was so mad. It was like a party. ▷

KARJEAN LEVINE/GETTY

Crow in Concord, California on the Jeep World Outside festival, August 2002.

Everybody was drinking and talking on stage, when I was supposed to be opening up for this other artist. After that I was like: "Okay, I gotta get my shit together."

We think of *Tuesday Night Music Club* now as a smash hit, but it wasn't an immediate success. It took the *All I Wanna Do* single to light the fuse.
It was fantastic when that record exploded, but it was very arduous up to that point. Because we had been touring in a van, and we had travelled everywhere. The first two places that ever played the record were Colorado and France, so it seemed like we were either in Colorado or France at all times. Then when we had a full-fledged hit on our hands we had to go out and tour it again. So we had two years on that record. And by the end of touring a record for two years, you really want to shoot yourself in the foot and say: "I'm done." So when I went in to make the second record [1996's *Sheryl Crow*], I was very over the first one.

At the time, I was like: "If I never play these songs again, I'll be happy." Nevertheless, the gift of that first record was [incredible]. I'm playing that music still, and very grateful for it. I think about a song like *All I Wanna Do* – which for years I just dreaded playing – and in hindsight there was a moment where I could look at that song as being attached to the infinite opportunities it brought me. When that thing took off, we toured in Japan, Singapore, Russia, Israel – and they knew every word, even if they didn't speak English. And what can do that? A song can.

From the mid-90s into the early millennium, Crow was a stone-cold superstar, releasing a stream of multi-platinum records including *Sheryl Crow* (1996), *The Globe Sessions* (1998) and *C'mon, C'mon* (2002). A lesser artist might have kept their head down and enjoyed the success, but Crow was already airing her political views – and suffering the fallout, while struggling with an unregulated tabloid press.

That second album caused controversy because of a line from *Love Is A Good Thing*: *'Watch our children while they kill each other, with a gun they bought at Walmart discount stores.'* Do you think artists have a duty to speak up politically?
I don't think they have a duty. I do miss that you can't do it any more because you have to be concerned about your following. Certainly, when I was coming up in the business, I didn't have a physical documentation of losing fans, or hearing how much they hated me. And there was a gift in that, certainly. But I grew up listening to great writers who wrote songs that got played on the radio that were about *stuff*. From Buffalo Springfield to Marvin Gaye, I mean, these were big hits and they were anti-war, they were about race relationships. I miss that. Almost any song I hear on the radio now is about sex, at least in the pop world. And then in country you hear this false narrative about America. I'm just like: "Where are the truth-tellers?" Well, they're probably not gonna get played on the radio, and I don't know if they're gonna 'trend' anywhere. I don't know how any of that works any more. But to me, writing is my safe place, it's my therapy, it's my love, it's my release.

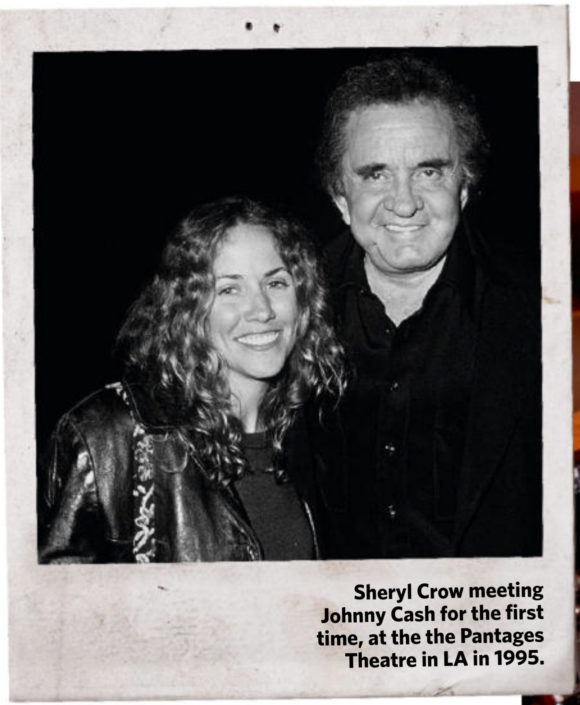
Your performance at the ill-fated Woodstock 1999 festival was soured by sexist cat-calls from the crowd. What do you remember about that day?
I have jarring memories of it. It's funny, you can have an amazing gig and remember very little about it. And when I say it was a shit gig, they were literally throwing faecal matter from the porta-potties they'd turned over. And it was a very sexist atmosphere. It was a debacle. Watching the documentary [*Trainwreck: Woodstock '99*], you realise: "Okay, all things that are money-driven are going to wind up being a shit-show."

Everything is about intention. If you start out with the intention being bringing people together in the spirit of Woodstock, it would have been a completely different scenario. They got what they got.

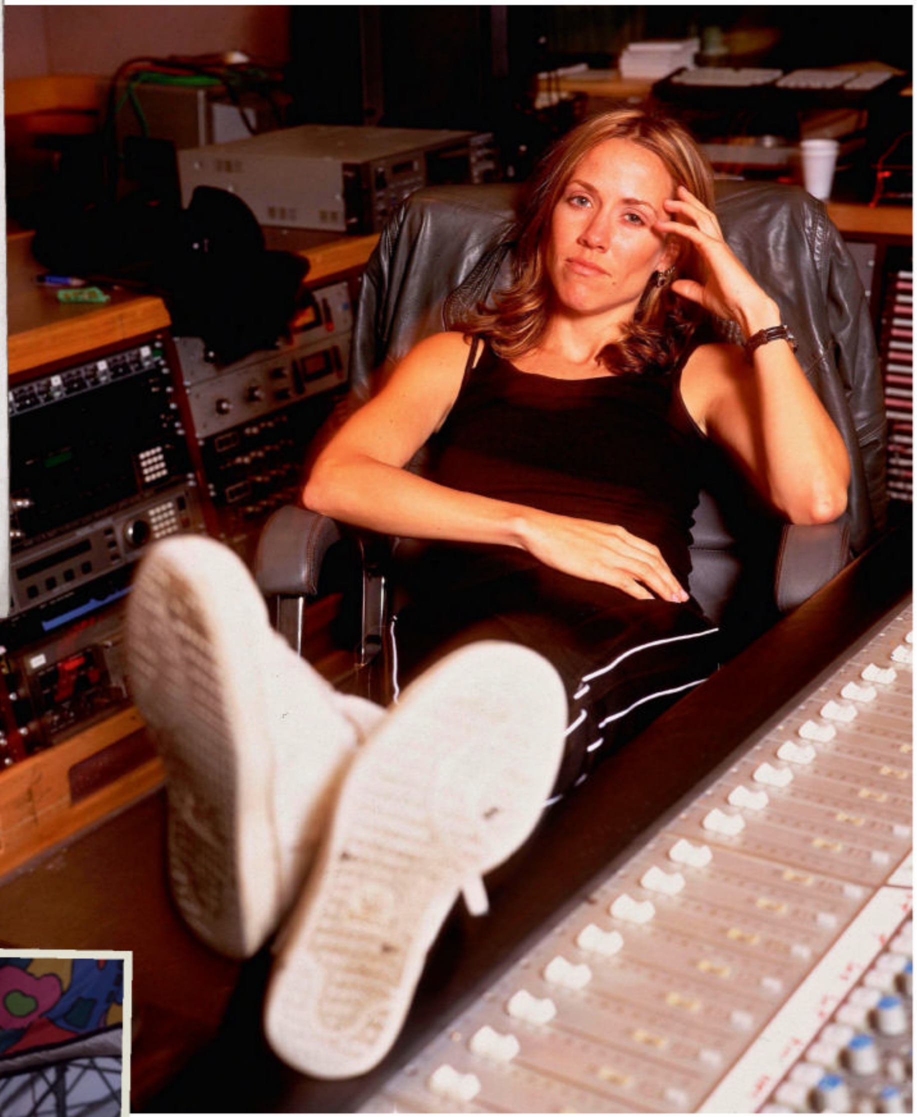
Which tracks from your first few albums would you put on a jukebox?
Oh gosh. Maybe the obscure songs. I think every artist wants to play the song that tells the tale of their parts – and those are generally not the hits. I mean, I'd say that *My Favourite Mistake*, from *The Globe Sessions*, would be on the jukebox, because I still enjoy playing that song and hearing it when it comes on the radio. There's also a song on that record called *Riverwide* that is very Appalachian-meets-Zeppelin. I love playing it. But people in the audience kinda look at me like: "What is she doing right now? I'm gonna grab a beer…" Yeah, I mean, there's a song on every record where I feel like: "Okay, this is the summation of my existence" – and those are generally the songs where people go to the loo.

Every young band and artist thinks attaining massive success will make all their dreams come true. Is that how you found it?
Oh no, I didn't find it that way. I found it to be

TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY

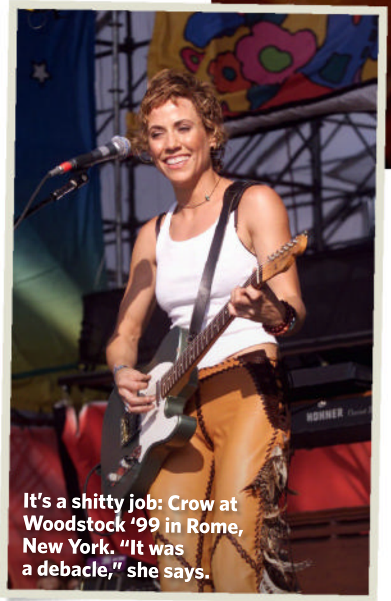


Sheryl Crow meeting Johnny Cash for the first time, at the the Pantages Theatre in LA in 1995.



very confusing. Because one day you're struggling to get on top, then within what feels like a week you're on top, and then there's this crazy hysteria to rip you apart. I think if you're an artist – which already dictates that you're a pretty sensitive person, at least in my case – I could read a review and it might be glowing, but there might be two negative comments, and those would stick with me far more than any of the accolades.

I think kids now are more able to navigate the fame thing, because they go in to become famous, and then everything serves that purpose. But for me, like I said, I wanted to be great. I wanted to write great music, I wanted to be the best musician I could be, I wanted to be important. And at the end of the day, you realise: "Wait a minute, I need to reassess what this means to me."



It's a shitty job: Crow at Woodstock '99 in Rome, New York. "It was a debacle," she says.

I remember Chrissie Hynde talking to me when I was making the *C'mon C'mon* record, which was *killing* me – I'd spent a ton of money on it and just couldn't seem to finish it. She was like: "Music is not your life, it's something that you do." And she told me about taking time off to raise her kids and then coming back. She's like: "This is something that should give you joy". It took that moment – and struggling up to that moment – for that to have meaning for me.

You've been open about struggling with depression around the turn of the millennium. How bad did things get?
It was pretty bad. For me, there were maybe three occasions where I had to get very tangible, like, stop everything and get help. I'm not ashamed to say it, and I've been lucky that I had people around me who were not afraid to ask how they could help, my manager being one of them.

"To me, writing is my safe place, it's my therapy, it's my love, it's my release."

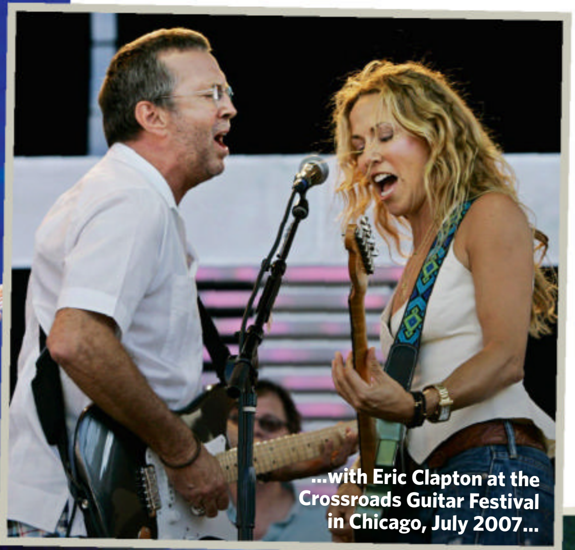
Are you glad social media wasn't around to document those times?
Honestly, if I had to live in a fish bowl like people do now… I wouldn't be able to.

Did you experience those kind of intrusive moments that haunt the biggest stars – fans hammering on the car windows and so on?
Yeah. I think the one that illustrates it best, though, was when my high-profile engagement [to Lance Armstrong] broke off in 2006, and six days later I was diagnosed with breast cancer. And the paparazzi were outside, shooting into the house, trying to get me looking forlornly out the window or something. I couldn't go for a jog in the neighbourhood without them running after me. At a certain point, it did make me feel like: "Who are we as humans if what sells these magazines that everybody is buying is seeing somebody at their lowest moment?" And it wasn't long after that that I wound up moving to Nashville. I felt like I could protect myself better there and I could feel better about what life is supposed to hold.

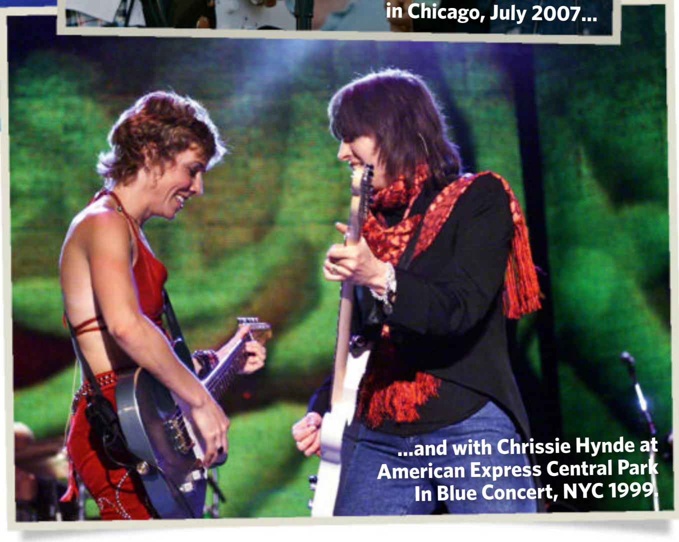
Your collaborators from that period include Prince, Keith Richards, even Johnny Cash. What are your favourite memories?
That would have been the one argument for having a cell phone – all the selfies. Prince was everything you hoped he would be. Larger-than-life. A great hang. A smart guy. Perhaps the finest musician I've been around. Y'know, the guy has a basketball court next to his studio – he's shooting in high heels. We recorded in his studio, and then he's like: "Let's go downtown." We go to First Avenue, and we kick the band off and we play. He was that guy. He was unpredictable. And if he picked you, that was like the height of a compliment. I still listen to his music and get off on it. I'll still go out and jog to *Sign O' The Times*. The guy's a genius. ▷

MAIN: MICK HUTSON/GETTY; TOP: STEVE GRANITZ/GETTY; BOTTOM: FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY

Rock and Rolling: Crow guesting with the Stones at the United Center in Chicago, May 31, 2013…



…with Eric Clapton at the Crossroads Guitar Festival in Chicago, July 2007…



…and with Chrissie Hynde at American Express Central Park In Blue Concert, NYC 1999

"I can remember the Rolling Stones saying to me: 'If you're thirty-five in rock'n'roll, you're not in rock'n'roll any more'."

Even now, you get the sense that Sheryl Crow is still questing. As a Nashville resident and lifelong fan of artists like Gram Parsons, Emmylou Harris and the Flying Burrito Brothers, her swerve into country music with 2013's *Feels Like Home* felt more honest than calculated. But she grew frustrated with country radio's gatekeepers, and has seemed more comfortable since returning to her roots with 2017's *Be Myself*, setting in motion a late-period run that includes this year's *Evolution*. It's a record with heavy themes that you can dance to, we suggest, and Crow doesn't disagree.

What was the thinking behind having your country period?

I wanted to stretch myself. I also loved the idea of only playing on the weekends, because I had two little baby boys. And that's what country artists do. But you can't break into that world, even if your music was inspired by country artists that these young people don't even know. So it was a great exercise, and I do feel like some of the songs on those records are really well crafted. But it's not completely authentic to what I do. I think my reaction to that experience was making *Be Myself* – and literally writing and recording it in three weeks.

You've won nine Grammy awards. How much does receiving awards mean to you?

My thirteen-year-old came into the piano room the other day, and on the top shelf are my Grammys. He said: "Mom, you should have a trophy case." And I was like: "Nah." Let's face it, I've gotten to stand on stage with Eric Clapton and sing with Johnny Cash. That could not be moulded into a piece of bronze and have as much meaning as being there. At the end of your life, I think it's the people and the moments, not the awards.

You said that 2019's *Threads* would be your last album. How come you've just released *Evolution*?

You can't believe anything that comes out of my mouth. Everything I've said in this interview has been a lie. No, I did say that, and for good reason, in that I do think making an album is, I would say, an overindulgence. But really what I mean is a complete and total waste of time and money. Because people don't listen to a full body of work, with a beginning, middle and end. This record, though, I had seven songs I sent to Mike [Elizondo, producer], and in the course of that we wrote a couple more, and it was like: "Well, we have an album."It just felt like a collection.

***'Evolution'* is a fascinating album title. But it doesn't seem like you're necessarily happy with the direction that human evolution has taken?**

Well, I guess I'm asking the question: where are we going? I'm the mom of two teenagers, and I ask the hard questions. Like, why are we in this position? The planet, environmentally, is in grave danger. We're in all of these wars. And people seem to hate each other in this country. And then you plop in the middle of all that, the advent of AI. Y'know, that is going to be a part of our every waking moment. And for artists it's terrifying. So I guess it just asks the question: at what point are we going to return to soul, spirit and truth from lies?

Why do you distrust AI so much?

It's interesting, because years ago [theoretical physicist] Stephen Hawking predicted that it wouldn't be the climate that would be the demise of mankind, it would be AI. Well, at the time, I was testifying before Congress about stopping global warming and working on climate change and blah-blah-blah, and I was, like: "AI? I don't even know what that is." And we're here now. I started reading about it, and thinking this is dangerous territory for artists. Because if you have AI programmes that can write lyrics for you – or you pay five dollars and have John Mayer sing your demo, and you won't be able to tell the difference – then where are we going?

Obviously, we've seen what happened with Taylor Swift. You have to ask at what point are we going to stand up, as a people – fuck politics, our government is not going to do anything about anything. Will we stand up and say: "Wait a minute, this is dangerous?" I mean, it's one thing to find a cure for cancer using AI, but it's a different thing to start bringing people back from the dead, like George Carlin, and having Taylor Swift looking like she's a porn star.

Tom Morello plays the guitar solo on the title track. What was it like working with him?

I love Tom. I've known him for years. He is a person who stands up for what he believes in and shows up to causes. He's just a good dude. We were both inducted at the Rock And Roll Hall

STONES: PAUL NATKIN/GETTY; HYNDE: K MAZUR/GETTY; CLAPTON: CHARLES REX ARBOGAST / ALAMY

Crow at the 2023 iHeartRadio Music Festival in Las Vegas.

Of Fame this year, so I got to give him a big hug and tell him how much it meant to me. The way he played was his interpretation of what AI looks and feels like. He nailed it. He gave a complete visual and physical feeling of the chaos that will ensue, through his guitar solo. I will be very curious to see if anybody I ever play that song with can nail his guitar solo. I don't think so!

Which other themes came up for you when making this album?
Well, one of the early things I sent Mike was a song called *Broken Record*. Right down the street is where the school shooting happened here in Nashville, and I was quite vocal about how it's time for [stricter] gun legislation. And just the hate, and the death threats, and the vitriol that I received on social media, it was shocking. And that song is a response. I had reached out to a bunch of country artists and said can we get in a room and talk about where we meet. And I got nothing. So that's what *Broken Record* is about. It's like, people who are sending out Christmas cards with their family holding guns. Why would you want to do that? I feel like the whole record is full of questions. Like: who are we?

It's election year in the US. Do you have hope?
Errrr… I'm scared. Honestly, there's just so much to fix. My feeling about where we're at – and it's probably true of every country – is that there's too few making too much money. And that's what's running everything. That's what's running the narrative. That's what's keeping people down, making people believe in a tyrannical candidate. It's a strange time. It's almost like we don't see the fact that the people that are making money – that are doing anything to keep the power – are keeping everybody else down.

The intro to *Alarm Clock* almost sounds like a teenage garage-punk band. Why do you think you still haven't mellowed?
That was a fun day. I said: "I want to write about how I hate my alarm clock, because when it goes off, all that beautiful dreaming about floating on a yacht, y'know, it all stops." Mike banged out this groove and it just fit the song.

"At the end of your life, I think it's the people and the moments, not the awards."

One of the beautiful things about making this record was I kinda treated it like a gift that I was giving myself. I didn't have the grinding of teeth that I usually have when I'm producing or tracking myself. This was like a kid in a garage with a bunch of motorcycles, and: "What shall we throw together to make this thing run?"

I've always said that I feel my best work is still in front of me. You have to be able to let go of wanting it to be successful. You reach a certain age, and in this climate, with streaming and everything, you doubt you'll be heard, and then all the parameters are off. But also, you've got all this fire in your belly, and all these things you want to write about, because you're watching how it affects your kids.

Despite those heavy themes, it doesn't feel like a doomy record.
Subconsciously I love being able to talk about the reality of being alive – but not make you want to jump out of a window.

Even a song like *All I Wanna Do*, which was dressed up with the most fun Stealers-Wheel-meets-Marvin-Gaye [sound], is pretty sardonic. And that's good. It's good to have all things be a part of the trip through the lyric.

Could you have been anything else, in a parallel universe?
I'm not built that way. I love the idea of parallel universes, I'm open to any crazy, cosmic, mind-blowing theory. But I guess one of the reasons I don't think in that context is because I don't feel like I'm very good at anything else. I'm not a great cook. I don't think I'd be a great wife… I get bored too easy.

Crow with her sons Levi (left) and Wyatt at the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremony in NYC in 2023.

Who do you think is a great model for a late-period career?
Well, Bonnie Raitt won the biggest award at the Grammys last year. That's a great career. Emmylou Harris, when she did that Daniel Lanois record [*Wrecking Ball*] and the two records after that, I was just like: "Woman! Your writing now is just incredible." I was like: "Y'all give me hope that there's no reason to stop just because you're over forty, over fifty, or even over sixty." Touring-wise I'm gonna keep going as long as I can. There is the pitfall of who wants to come see a seventy-year-old woman perform. But people want to see Madonna. So I don't know. I just try not to limit my thinking.

When you look back on your career, have you had some fun?
I've had the most fun. I've had some of the funnest evenings, the funnest early mornings. All of it. I feel like I've had several different lives. Y'know, there was the Hollywood period where I would have tons of parties at my house, with people like Warren Beatty, Jack Nicholson, the Rolling Stones and John Travolta. I look back at that and I go: "Who was that person?" And now I'm raising two boys, and we laugh and play disco music while we're cooking. That is what I call the infinite possibility of life.

Evolution is available now via Big Machine.

MAIN: RICH POLK/GETTY; INSET: EVAN AGOSTINI / ALAMY

BAD BOYS RUNNING WILD

With two members "smashed after touring", in early 1983 the **Scorpions**' career was wobbling. Then the following year's *Love At First Sting* album turned them into global superstars.

Words: **Dave Everley**

It wasn't easy to upstage Van Halen in their prime, but calling in the US Air Force will do the trick. It was Sunday, May 29, 1983, and Scorpions were second on the bill on the so-called Heavy Metal Day at the Us Festival, the massive music jamboree near San Bernardino in California organised by promoter Bill Graham and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, which also featured Ozzy Osbourne, Judas Priest and a rising Mötley Crüe.

A problem was that Van Halen were being Van Halen. The headliners may have honed their chops covering early Scorpions songs *Speedy's Coming* and *Catch A Train* in their formative LA club days, but now they weren't above a little inter-band shithousery. And so the Scorpions found themselves prohibited by order of Dave Lee Roth and co. from using their full stage set, beyond a bit of pyro to open the show.

Fortunately, the band's Liverpool-born tour manager, Bob Adcock, hit on a brilliant idea. The resourceful scouser put a call in to a nearby US Air Force base, and asked if they could fly some fighter jets over the festival site at the precise moment the Scorpions kicked off their set. "Sure," came the reply. "Why the hell not?"

"The planes were outstanding," recalls guitarist Rudolf Schenker, a man who exists in a permanent state of full-tilt enthusiasm. "Five fighter jets flying above the stage and over the mountains just as we started. You could not do that today. Van Halen heard about it and weren't happy."

Assisted by the appearance of some multi-million dollar military hardware, the Scorpions stole the day from under the noses of Van Halen. But that Us Festival appearance was more than just a victory for Germany over America in some imaginary heavy metal Cold War. It also represented a turning point for the Scorpions. The album they released early the following year, *Love At First Sting*, was a slab of exhilarating 80s heavy metal designed to appeal to American audiences. Propelled by the timeless MTV hit *Rock You Like A Hurricane*, it did just that. Suddenly, Scorpions were no longer Euro-metal curiosities with funny accents. They were global superstars.

> **"The original title, for me at least, was *F**k You Like A Hurricane*."**
> **Herman Rarebell**

"We always wanted to make a better album each time," says Schenker. "We pushed ourselves: 'Let's do it better, let's do it better.' With *Love At First Sting* we did it."

In 1970, the then 22-year-old Rudolf Schenker told a German music magazine that the Scorpions would become "one of the thirty biggest rock bands in the world". It seemed like a preposterous idea at the time. But 1982's *Blackout* album reached the US Top 10, and saw the band headlining New York's prestigious Madison Square Garden for the first time.

"At that time, the band was very tight," says ▷

DEBORAH FEINGOLD/GETTY

Coming at ya! Rudolf Schenker (left) and Matthias Jabs with the Scorpions at Rosemont Horizon, Illinois on the *Love At First Sting* tour, May 1984.

"Klaus and Herman wrote the lyrics together. It was Klaus's very romantic, harmonic mind and Herman's very dirty mind."

Rudolf Schenker

drummer Herman Rarebell, who joined the band before 1977's *Taken By Force* album and stayed until 1996. "We said: 'Let's stick together, go for the same goals.' That changed later on, of course, but at that point everyone in the band was united."

But that sense of unity wasn't quite as strong as he suggests. They began work on *Love At First Sting* in early 1983 at Stockholm's Polar Studios, owned by Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Anderson of ABBA. Dieter Dierks, their producer-come-mentor who worked on every Scorpions album from 1973's *Fly To The Rainbow* to 1988's *Savage Amusement*, was present. But Rarebell and bassist Francis Buchholz were not. In their place were former Rainbow drummer Bobby Rondinelli and ex-Wild Horses/soon-to-be-Dio bassist Jimmy Bain.

"Herman and Francis were both smashed after touring," says Schenker. "We had already booked the studio to make this album. Everything was really upfront, nothing was behind people's backs."

Rarebell has a different memory of it. "I was a total alcoholic, totally on drugs. It was rock'n'roll to do that stuff back then," he says. His playing was suffering, and he needed to get help and straighten himself out. "But they went behind my back [by getting Rondinelli in]. I said to myself: 'Fuck this shit, I'm going to leave.'"

It was Dierks who eventually persuaded Rarebell not to quit. The producer reminded him that they had enlisted Don Dokken to sing on the demos for *Blackout* after Klaus Meine had to undergo surgery on his vocal cords. Pragmatism took precedence over sentimentality in the world of the Scorpions. "Dieter Dierks said: 'Listen, don't take it badly, it's not personal,'" says Rarebell.

In the end it would be the Us Festival that bought the splintered band back together. "We got an offer to play it, and we said: 'Mamma mia, we have to take it!'" says Schenker.

They called a halt to the Polar Studios sessions, and in May 1983 flew to the US for a short tour, culminating in that jet fighter-augmented Us Festival appearance.

"Everything about it was fantastic," remembers Schenker. "It was unbelievable. Every second was an inspiration. When we finished and we'd done so well, we said: 'We have to go back in the studio and do it together.' The Us Festival was like having a second chance. It was an energy bomb: 'Yeah, let's do it!'"

That second chance got under way after the Scorpions returned home to Germany. This time around they holed up in Dieter Dierks's studio in his home town of Stommeln. Bobby Rondinelli and Jimmy Bain were gone; Herman Rarebell and Francis Buchholz had been reinstated. The sessions they'd recorded in Sweden were totally scrapped – something that prompts no small degree of schadenfreude in the drummer.

"I knew his playing would be much too busy for these songs," says Rarebell. "And then Dierks said: 'I can't use any of this material, you have to come down to the studio and play the drums on the whole album again."

"It was working good," Schenker says of the sessions in Sweden, "but it didn't sound like the Scorpions. We had this energy from the Us Festival. We realised we had to do it [the album] together."

Although the Swedish sessions were canned, the band held on to the material. The band had gradually evolved from the psychedelic-edged hard rock of their earliest albums to the gleaming heavy metal of *Blackout*, and the new songs had an even more melodic edge. "It was touring with bands like Foreigner and Aerosmith and Journey that taught us," says Rarebell. "We saw how they wrote, and we learned fast."

Among the songs they'd written were a string of what would become solid-gold Scorpions classics, chief among them being *Rock You Like A Hurricane*. Schenker had written the song on the *Blackout* tour, but it needed a set of lyrics to match its propulsive riff. That task fell to Klaus Meine and Herman Rarebell.

"Klaus and Herman wrote the lyrics together," says Schenker. "It was Klaus's very romantic, harmonic mind and Herman's very dirty mind."

The drummer certainly bought the sleaze. "I thought we needed a rock song with lyrics that should be forbidden," he says. "The original title, for me at least, was *Fuck You Like A Hurricane*. The record company looked at me and said: 'You're completely out of your mind!' Which I was."

The song was nothing if not autobiographical. "I would open the curtains in the morning after partying all night to let the sun come in," he says. "The question was always, [to imaginary sexual partner] 'And what is your name?' For me it was a wild time, it really was sex and drugs and rock'n'roll."

While the album's opening lines *'It's early morning, the sun comes out/Last night was shaking and pretty loud'* were fairly tame, other lyrics wouldn't

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY

Rockin' like a hurricane: Scorpions at the Us Festival in California, May 29, 1983.

wash today. *'The bitch is hungry, she needs to tell/So give her inches and feed her well,'* Meine sings, presumably not referring to his pet pooch.

"Looking back at it now, it makes you laugh," snorts an unrepentant Rarebell. "There are all these songs that go: 'Motherfucker, asshole…' They would never have been played in America back then. Now you could release it as *Fuck You Like A Hurricane* and nobody would give a shit."

At the other end of the spectrum was *Still Loving You*, a textbook 80s Euro-metal power ballad. Schenker had been trying to get it on a Scorpions album for seven or eight years. "For every album, I'd start [hums opening chords] and there'd be no reaction," says the guitarist. "Klaus liked it, but the rest of the band were: 'No, Rudi, that's too much.' But then when we started rehearsing for *Love At First Sting*, I played the lick again. Then Matthias [Jabs, guitar] comes in, then Herman comes in, then the bass, then Klaus, and there we were: *Still Loving You*." (Schenker claims the song was responsible for a mini-baby boom after it was released as a single in '84, although evidence to support that is elusive.)

The rest of the album wasn't short of killer tracks: statement opener *Bad Boys Running Wild* ("Our *The Boys Are Back In Town*," according to Rarebell), the grandstanding *Big City Nights*, yearning band-on-the-road anthem *Coming Home*, and anti-war broadside *Crossfire*, a lost gem written about divided Cold War-era Germany but just as potent today. But the defining characteristic of the album was how slick it was, even compared to *Blackout*. It sounded like a record written with MTV and radio in mind.

"No, no," counters Schenker. "It was pure instinct. It was what we needed to do to make the perfect Scorpions record."

'The perfect Scorpions record' was released in March 1984. Keeping up the tradition of striking album artwork, the arty yet provocative cover for *Love At First Sting* featured a black-and-white image of two semi-naked models in a clinch. The band had initially approached Andy Warhol to shoot it, but the artist insisted on keeping the rights to the image. "We couldn't make T-shirts and all the other stuff," says Schenker. Instead they tapped up veteran fashion photographer Helmut Newton.

Schenker: "When we were doing the shoot, Klaus had some ideas: 'Can you do it this way…' And Helmut Newton looked at him and said: 'Do you want to do my job here?' Klaus didn't say so much after that."

The album was preceded by first single *Rock You Like A Hurricane*. In keeping with the band's supersized ambitions, they enlisted A-list video director David Mallett – famous for his work with Queen, David Bowie and Blondie – to direct the promo clip. The result was a classic of its time, featuring prowling panthers, *Spinal Tap*-esque perspex tubes, and the band playing in a less than structurally sound cage surrounded by rabid fans and scantily clad models – the wrong side of sexist, maybe, but undeniably memorable.

"Five fighter jets flying above the stage just as we started. Van Halen heard about it and weren't happy."

Rudolf Schenker

"David Mallett made all these girls go crazy on the gates [to the cage]," says Rarebell. "He wanted to impress the American record company with it, because MTV was so important in America. Everybody watched it."

The video certainly did its job, helping to push the single into the *Billboard* Top 30 and helping its parent album to peak at No.6 in the US (it reached No.17 in the UK). The tour in support of *Love At First Sting* – with the then-little-known Bon Jovi as support – similarly kicked things to another level, even if it got off to a shaky start when the band decided to scrap their stage set just before the tour started. Luckily there was a ready-made solution in an unused AC/DC stage set.

"It was built for them and they didn't take it," Schenker says. "When they offered it, we thought: 'We don't have the right one now, maybe we could live with this one.' That's the one we used in the end."

The epic *Love At First Sting* tour lasted more than two years, taking in multiple nights at NYC's Madison Square Garden, an appearance at the huge first Rock In Rio festival in '85, and a second-on-the-bill appearance at the 1986 Monsters Of Rock festival at Donington, as well as producing the hugely successful *World Wide Live* album. The album sold more than three million copies in the US alone (only 1990's *Crazy World*, featuring global megahit *Winds Of Change*, has sold more worldwide). At the end of it all, the Scorpions were bona fide rock A-listers.

The current incarnation of the band, still led by Schenker, Klaus Meine and longtime guitarist Matthias Jabs, will celebrate the album's 40th anniversary on their upcoming tour – although the chances of any US jets flying overhead during their set are slim.

"It was the peak of the eighties for us," Schenker says of *Love At First Sting*. "We were working like crazy, everything was crazy. It was the biggest any German band had become. We felt like ambassadors."

Scorpions play London's Wembley Arena on June 8.

Scorpions 2024: (l-r) Rudolf Schenker, Mikkey Dee, Klaus Meine, Matthias Jabs, Pawel Maciwoda.

TOP: EBET ROBERTS/GETTY; BOTTOM: © MARC THEIS/PRESS

TOGETHER WE'RE
LOUDER
VISIT LOUDERSOUND.COM
THE HOME OF HAMMER ROCK PROG BLUES

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Continuing after the death of their frontman was an emotional struggle, but with their first album without him **Big Big Train** have something he would have been proud of.

Words: **Jo Kendall**

The river Stour meanders through the stunning Dorset countryside just 300 yards from Gregory Spawton's door. Quietly brimming with fauna, flora and fungi, it's one of the songwriter/bassist's favourite spots to meander, too; a place for rumination, or just to catch some vitamin D.

One July day in 2023, Spawton's constitutional took on extra significance. Excited but a little nervous, he put on his headphones and reached for his Sony MP3 Walkman, then pressed 'Play' on the final mixes of tracks for a new album by his band Big Big Train.

The music unfolded, and the mixes were good – great, in fact – across a suite of songs remarkable for even existing, given what the group had experienced over the previous 20 months. "There was a strong sense of catharsis," Spawton tells *Classic Rock*. "I had to blink away some tears."

After a time of calamity, sorrow and uncertainty, Big Big Train's sixteenth studio album, *The Likes Of Us*, truly signposted their future.

The band began in 1990 in Bournemouth. Spawton had graduated from Reading Uni with an archaeology degree and relocated to Wessex, and formed Big Big Train – as guitarist and keyboard player – with bassist Andy Poole. Two demo albums later, they'd signed to the Giant Electric Pea label owned by venerable neo-prog group IQ. Influenced by golden-era 70s prog such as Van der Graaf Generator, Genesis and King Crimson, alongside Marillion, It Bites and Prefab Sprout, the songs had dramatic themes ranging from history and mythology to childhood memories. *Goodbye To The Age Of Steam* in 1994 commenced a run of high-quality modern progressive rock albums exhibiting tight musicianship and ambitious arrangements, which reached an apogee with the Sean Filkins-fronted *Gathering Speed* (2004) and *The Difference Machine* (2007).

In 2009, the line-up strengthened with Spawton settling into a bass role, and guitarist Dave Gregory (ex-XTC) and Spock's Beard superstar drummer Nick D'Virgilio joining. "One of the cool things I liked about BBT was Greg's vision, musicality, great songwriting and an unapologetic love of progressive rock," D'Virgilio says.

Filkins had left, so producer-engineer Rob Aubrey recommended Nottingham songwriter and multi-instrumentalist David Longdon to the group. Longdon had lost out on becoming Genesis' vocalist in 1997, but forged on as a solo artist and lauded session player. His superb, soulful vocal and boundless creativity gave BBT – and the already high-achieving composer Spawton – wings. The band gained a legion of ardent fans who called themselves Passengers.

By *Common Ground*, album 13, released in July 2021, the band had their own label, English Electric Recordings, and were an award-winning, chart-tickling success. Although the seven members were spread across the globe, thanks to D'Virgilio's "bitching and moaning, asking 'Why can't we play live?'" they finally convened and played some rapturously received shows, souped-up by a flat-capped, Colliery-style brass section, adding further grandeur to their cinematic storytelling.

Then, just as their new album *Welcome To The Planet*, slated for a January 2022 release, was being promoted, and with their first US shows planned, tragedy struck when, on November 20, 2021, David Longdon died following a catastrophic accident at home. The band, and Passengers, went into shock. For Longdon's fiancée Sarah Louise Ewing, BBT's official artist, her world collapsed. Spawton reeled from the sudden loss of his creative partner of more than 20 years, his friend, his "brother".

While deep in grief and emotional devastation, a practical question the band needed to address was: what was going to happen to Big Big Train?

"Initially, I couldn't contemplate the band continuing at all," Spawton, says, shaking his head. "It took some time. And Sarah was important to the decision because David had spoken about this to her: 'If something happens to me, the band must carry on'. I felt I had consent."

The next step was to speak with BBT's 'elders': drummer Nick D'Virgilio, and Beardfish guitarist/keyboard player/vocalist Rikard Sjöblom, a permanent member since 2015. Spawton made it clear that if either one of them had any reservations, then the band would cease.

"David's passing was just horrible," says D'Virgilio. "We had so many plans. And David's life had changed through meeting Sarah. We saw his self-worth grow, he was conquering long-standing fears. Then everything was taken away."

> **"Initially, I couldn't contemplate the band continuing at all."**
>
> **Gregory Spawton**

"Our friend had gone," Spawton says, "but we'd all put our heart and soul into Big Big Train for the last decade or so, so we all felt: 'Okay, let's see if we can pick ourselves up, find a vocalist, go forward. And of course it was important to find the right guy."

Welcome To The Planet was released on January 28, 2022, a reluctant farewell to Longdon. On April 27, Alberto Bravin was introduced to the world as Big Big Train's new frontman.

Bravin was an outsider, a fan of BBT's music but one who'd never met Longdon or Spawton. Talent-spotting for a potential solo album, Spawton remembers seeing Bravin play with Italian proggers PFM at Camden's Electric Ballroom in 2015. "I thought: 'Who's that young guy singing and playing keys at the back? He should be the frontman!' I wrote 'PFM keyboard guy' on my phone. When we started looking for singers, I thought of him."

Spawton had to find out 'PFM keyboard guy''s name and track him down. With Bravin also on our Zoom interview call, Spawton is able to address him – who he calls Alby – directly. "It wasn't that easy," he says, "Alby wasn't so into social media…"

"You sent me a message on Facebook," says Bravin. "And I didn't reply [laughs]."

But he did respond to a subsequent email, and sent demo vocals back for consideration.

"I was listening to several people's guide vocals, and my wife Kathy came in the room," Spawton recalls. "Kathy isn't a muso, or prog [fan], she just likes good music. She heard Alby and went: 'Ooh, goosebumps.' I knew I was on to something."

PFM (Premiata Forneria Marconi), founded ▷

Building up steam: Big Big Train with new singer Alberto Bravin (left) at London's Cadogan Hall, September 2023.

in 1970, are the biggest prog band in Italy; Bravin giving them up for BBT was a big deal, but a sacrifice he was ready to make. The multi-instrumentalist and engineer/producer had the opportunity to shape music created in a mould that he loved. In the 60s, Bravin's father had worked as a waiter in London. Bravin grew up listening to his dad's original Beatles records, as well as 60s Italian music with "great songs, arrangements and orchestras".

Bravin's presence upped BBT's Italian contingent, alongside Nick D'Virgilio "and my own Italian heritage," says Spawton. Bravin's appointment was warmly received by the majority of Passengers – they missed Longdon terribly, but trusted the band's decision. His first shows with the band, that September, showcased the singer's personality, and a look that was more hi-tops, skinny jeans and bomber jackets than tailoring. His training as an opera singer blended with an affection for metal; Ozzy's *Crazy Train* became BBT's intro music. Bravin carried BBT's, and Longdon's, flame in a congenial and kind-hearted manner that elicited a lot of emotion, alongside D'Virgilio's touching tribute. Bravin was 'the right guy'.

Spawton, Bravin, D'Virgilio and Sjöblom were now at the centre of BBT, joined by violinist Clare Lindley, prog guitar favourite Dave Foster and 30-year-old Norwegian keyboard player Oskar Holldorff, from English Electric signing Dim Gray. The chemistry was undeniable, and led to a wealth of new material.

Ditching their usual MO of working remotely, in May 2023 the group "went old-school" and headed to Trieste, Bravin's home town in Italy, and spent three weeks at Urban Recording making their new album, *The Likes Of Us*.

It was a happy, harmonious time they spent in Trieste, with bonds deepening. D'Virgilio notes: "The life in the songs on that record is because we were in the same room, and there's something pretty special about this bunch of people. It was a great vibe."

The Likes Of Us will gladden the hearts of Passengers, and anyone seeking adventurous, inviting rock songs with emotional heft. It begins with the gorgeous overture *Light Left In The Day*, which features Bravin's voice from the get-go ("Alby is the new voice of Big Big Train, we couldn't wait five or six minutes in to hear him"), followed by *Oblivion*, a Dave Foster/Nick D'Virgilio co-write that enabled BBT to "get the guitars out – we're not a folk rock band!" Spawton says with a laugh.

"David's passing was just horrible. We had so many plans. Then everything was taken away."

Nick D'Virgilio

Seventeen-minute centrepiece *Beneath The Masts* was written on a cheap 12-string guitar bought by Spawton while living temporarily in Rome. It was an unwieldy song, informed by the death of his stepfather, which Bravin streamlined.

"A lot has happened in my life in the last couple of years, and not a lot of that's been positive," Spawton explains. "This was a serious attempt to deal with grief and bereavement. I needed someone to enunciate these raw feelings."

"That was the most emotional vocal," says Bravin, nodding. "With me, Greg and Fulvio in the room, we all just lost it."

From here we have the punchy, melodic slice of carpe diem that is *Skates On*, the wild, romantic story of Trieste's famous castle folly, *Miramare*, and Bravin's own *Love Is The Light*, speaking of a struggle with depression, the start of three songs about friendship.

"*Bookmarks* is where I talk directly about what happened with David," Spawton says of this classic, BBT-style ballad. "I was incredibly low, and I had support from my wife and close family. But I found that my oldest childhood friends came to the fore and rallied round."

Album closer *The Last Eleven* finds Spawton revisiting his school days, being picked for the cricket team – or not. "I was a weedy kid in the second, 'extra' team, the lowest of the lot. However, I was a secret weapon, a really good fast bowler [laughs]. This is about finding people on your wavelength, who stay with you for life."

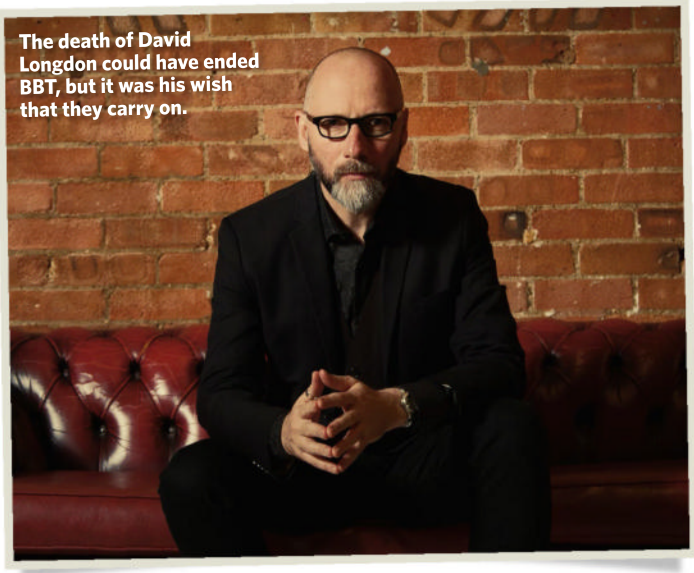
When recording had been completed, Spawton – who'd normally guide the process from start to finish – stepped back to let Rob Aubrey and Bravin do the mixes. BBT were now signed to progressive music champions InsideOut ("I first met [founder] Thomas Waber in 1994," says D'Virgilio. "Spock's was one of their first bands on the label. I've seen him grow that company from a little thing to having Dream Theater and Jethro Tull"). Everything they did was set to go up a level and continue the journey – records, touring, promotion, the works. They've embraced it wholeheartedly. But *The Likes Of Us* had to be right first, and that's what Spawton listened for while on his river walk on that July day in 2023.

"I wanted to capture the soul of the band," says Spawton. "We're going to evolve, but we're rooted in seventies progressive rock and I didn't want us to come adrift from our moorings. When I heard the mixes, I just went: 'Wow. The boys have really nailed this.'"

"I needed something in my life, a positive thing to face down the wall of pain," he continues. "Finding Alby as a friend, a colleague, someone to create with and talk shit with has been important. It's made me feel that this is a band I want to be in. There's raw emotion on there, but a record we can deliver live. It's about us, the band, the likes of us."

"It's also about all the people who supported the band through the difficult times," offers Bravin. "The likes of us, we are together."

The Likes Of Us is out now via InsideOut.



The death of David Longdon could have ended BBT, but it was his wish that they carry on.

TOP: WILL IRELAND; DAVID: SOPHOCLES ALEXIOU/PRESS

THE BLACK KEYS
OHIO PLAYERS
THE NEW ALBUM
OUT APRIL 5
nonesuch
EASY EYE SOUND
ON TOUR IN MAY

ON TARGET

Their debut album *Taking On The World* was a killer. After that, while circumstances have conspired to see them shoot wide occasionally, **Gun**'s aim has been true, and with new album *Hombres* they've hit the bullseye again.

Words: **James McNair**

STEVIE KYLE/PRESS

Giuliano 'Jools' Gizzi still remembers Gun's first time on *Top Of The Pops*. It was August 1989, and their debut single *Better Days* had charted. Young Glaswegian upstarts in ripped denim and biker jackets, Gun were in seventh heaven – especially when meeting former Prince & The Revolution stars Wendy & Lisa, who were on the show with their solo hit *Satisfaction*. "I said to Wendy: 'Can I shake the hand that's touched Prince?'" Jools recalls, smiling. "She said: 'Sure. You can shake the hand that's slapped him a few times as well!'"

There was a touch of happenstance about this Prince-themed exchange, for Gun's *Better Days* had actually been inspired by him. "Yeah, we'd been listening to Prince a lot," says singer Dante Gizzi, Jools's younger brother by eight years. "The verse of *Better Days* owes a lot to *Mountains*, off his album *Parade*."

"It's absolutely a heavier version of that," Jools says in agreement. "Plus we tried to make the chorus a bit like *Why Can't This Be Love* by Van Halen. Our management had drilled the importance of strong songs into us. We looked to the best for inspiration."

Prince-meets-Van Halen? Way to go. And if Wendy & Lisa clocked *Mountains*' palpable influence on Gun's first hit, they didn't let on.

Meanwhile, back in Glasgow, a certain Mrs Gizzi had told half the neighbourhood to tune in to *Top Of The Pops* that night. "I think that was when mum finally realised we weren't wasting our time," says Jools.

Today, *Classic Rock* is with the Gizzi brothers at Gun HQ, namely their own Morsecode Studios in Hillington Park, Glasgow. With the release of a fine new album, *Hombres*, more of which later, they're ready to tell their whole story. In 1989, Dante Gizzi was Gun's teenage bassist. Today he's their frontman, having replaced original singer Mark Rankin for 2012's *Break The Silence*. Gun's story is one of heady highs and crushing lows, of hits, mega-tours and line-up changes. Ultimately it's the tale of how two Scots-Italian brothers learned to become (largely) self-sufficient – and how they did it the hard way.

"We've got a really great bond with the other guys in the band right now," Jools stresses, "but the songwriting identity of Gun is me and Dante. We still write in the room that was his at our parents' house," he adds, pointing at his kid brother. "There's a family history there that we can feel. That room's our sanctuary."

Jools and Dante Gizzi were born in Glasgow's Calton district, close to legendary music venue Barrowland. Their transplanted Italian family had emigrated from Lazio, between Rome and Naples, two generations earlier, and now mum was a cleaner at Glasgow's Royal Infirmary while dad worked at a biscuit factory.

As a teenager Jools almost joined infamous local gang The Tongs. "I thought I was gallus [Scots slang for tough, cock-sure], and stupidly I wanted to be like them," he says. Fortunately other obsessions soon took over. "I can still picture Jools wheeling his amp to rehearsals in a Fine Fare trolley on a freezing Sunday morning in January," says Dante. "Now *that's* dedication! But he *was* a bit of a ned," the younger Gizzi adds, laughing. "Jools even bullied a kid at school into giving him guitar lessons."

Gun's early promise blossomed at the tail end of the 80s, just after the boom that saw record companies flock to Scotland to sign pop-rock acts such as Deacon Blue, Texas and Hipsway. Thatcherism bit hard in Glasgow's East End, and unemployment and poverty were rife. But if you worked hard and got that little bit of luck, it seemed there was a way out. "Okay, we were a hard rock band," says Jools. "But we'd seen our friends Heavy Pettin' get signed to Polydor, and Sharleen Spiteri [of Texas] was our singer Mark's cousin, so we knew it could be done."

Local management duo Gerry McElhone and Rab Andrews had looked after Altered Images and were now handling Texas. Mindful of their city's love of hard rock, they also sought a heavier act to add to their roster. After Gun caught their eye at a gig in Kirkintilloch, a showcase spot at the Midas pub on Glasgow's St Vincent Street was duly arranged. "We were Bon Jovi-ed out of our heads," recalls Jools, smiling. "The long coats, the big hair, the scarves…"

> **"Jools got pissed off and threw his guitar stand at this guy who had twatted him with a flying bocadillo."**
>
> **Dante Gizzi**

Initially, GR management couldn't make their mind up about Gun. They could see great potential, but they felt the band weren't quite ready.

"I remember me, Mark [Rankin] and my girlfriend Lesley, who's now my wife, went for a Chinese after the Midas gig," says Jools. "It was like: 'Okay, probably time to pack it in. We've spent so much money on demos and PA equipment.'"

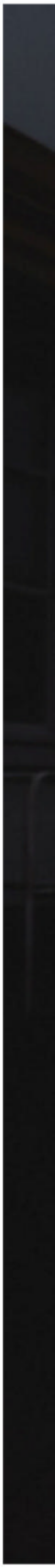
"Plus we'd had grief from my ma about getting a proper job," Dante adds.

But Rab Andrews wasn't done with Gun yet, and he convinced his business partner to take a punt. Indeed it was McElhone who invited Gun to make use of GR's studio and rehearsal rooms free of charge.

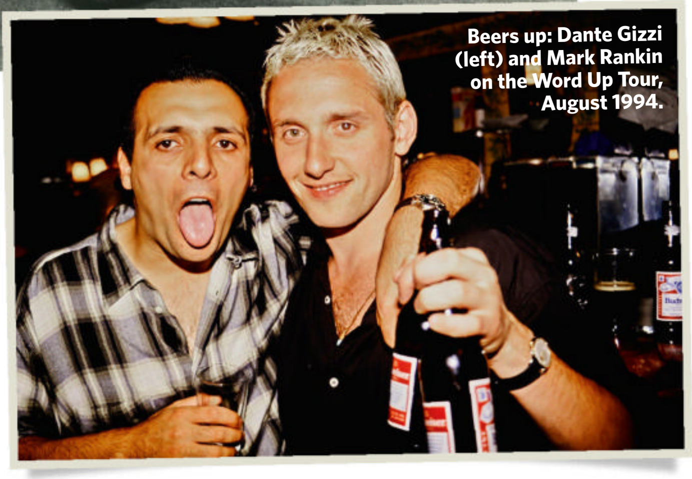
"He said: 'I can definitely get record companies up to see you, but the songs have to be right," recalls Jools. "So me and Mark worked as hard as we could. We stopped gigging and concentrated on songwriting. Eventually there was a bidding war between Mercury, Phonogram, Polydor and A&M. We'd toughened up our image by that point as well."

Released on A&M in July 1989, *Taking On The World*, Gun's debut album, was a bold statement of intent from its title down. Jools: "Gerry said: 'This is where the real work starts – now you're competing with the big boys'."

Yet for all Gun's apparent front, they clearly had a grasp on the quiet desperation of many working-class people's lives. *Better Days* and the album's anthemic title track were hopeful songs, yes, but their lyrics reflected harsh realities. The album's moody black-and-white cover, meanwhile, was very Glaswegian. A bleak study in Scottish stoicism, it depicted Jools, Dante, Mark Rankin, ▷



First shot: Gun's debut-album line-up of (l-r) Dante Gizzi, Scott Shields, Mark Rankin, Stephen 'Baby' Stafford, Jools Gizzi.



Beers up: Dante Gizzi (left) and Mark Rankin on the Word Up Tour, August 1994.

second guitarist Stephen 'Baby' Stafford and drummer Scott Shields striding forth. "It was shot close to an old granary building, and the back cover has the cranes on the Clyde shipyards," notes Jools. "You're looking at a river that thousands of Scottish people sailed on to try and make better lives for themselves, and that was us setting out too."

If Gun were looking for a show of faith, they quickly got one. While touring the US in 1990, a fax came through from the Rolling Stones organisation. Astoundingly, they were offering Gun a support slot on the European leg of their *Steel Wheels* tour, from May to August. There was just one snag: Gun were committed to two shows at the Whisky A Go Go in Los Angeles on the Friday and Saturday, and would need to fly to Rotterdam on Saturday if they were to open for the Stones there on Sunday.

"The guy at the US record company said: 'You can't pull out, these dates are set in stone!" says Jools. "But in the end we did both shows on the Friday, then hot-tailed it to Rotterdam. We got quite a lot of US press out if it, actually. You know: 'Scotch [sic] band flees LA to join Stones…'"

Jet-lagged but firing on adrenalin, Gun now partook of the Stones' rock'n'roll circus. They played to vast arena audiences, and jammed Muddy Waters songs with Keith and Ronnie while partying into the wee small hours. After the two bands played Munich's Olympic Stadium, Dante found himself behind the velvet rope at some hip club, him and Mick Jagger propping up the bar.

"I said: 'Mick, do you mind me asking why you chose our band?' He said: 'Because you reminded me of us when we started out.' I said: 'Wow, that's really touching. Can I buy you a pint? 'He said: 'Don't be silly, Dante, it's a free bar!'"

Gun's next two albums – 1992's *Gallus* and 1994's *Swagger* – reflected their growing confidence. They'd already ridden out a number of line-up changes, *Gallus*'s rip-roaring first single *Steal Your Fire* reached No.24 in the UK, and the celebrity endorsements kept coming. *Gallus* was instantly a firm favourite of Iron Maiden's Steve Harris, and it was at his insistence that, in September 1992, Gun became the unlikely fourth act playing Spain's four-date Monsters Of Rock festival alongside metal heavyweights Iron Maiden, Megadeth and Pantera. *Gallus* had depicted Scottish boxing legend Benny Lynch on its cover, but he was a flyweight. Ominous? Just a tad.

"We were Bon Jovi-ed out of our heads. The long coats, the big hair, the scarves..."

Jools Gizzi

"We were definitely a bit of a mismatch," confirms Dante. "People chucked pesetas at us, bottles, you name it. Jools got pissed off and threw his guitar stand at this guy who had twatted him with a flying bocadillo [baguette-style sandwich]. Next morning we're back at the hotel, and the guy from the Spanish label was like: 'Guys! Come and see this!' It was us, on the front cover of [major Spanish newspaper] *El País*. We were like: 'What does the headline say?' He goes: 'Gun Open Fire On Crowd'."

Arguably the best hard rock/dance crossover since Aerosmith and Run DMC re-made *Walk This Way*, Gun's take on NYC funk act Cameo's 1986 hit *Word Up*, *Swagger*'s first single, became their biggest hit, reaching No.8 in the UK in 1994. Truly inspired, it won Gun a 'Best Cover Version' trophy at that year's MTV Europe Music Awards.

The band also filmed an X-rated promotional clip for *Word Up* – which was warmly received when screened at the Monsters Of Rock festival that year.

"I remember that video," says Dante. "The director goes: 'Right, we're about to start filming the X-rated version with the girls, can everybody else leave the set?' Me, Jools and Mark were halfway to the door before we thought: 'Wait a fucking minute! We're paying for this. We're going to stay here and enjoy it!'"

By now it looked as though Gun really *could* take on the world. But it was not to be. The results of an ill-fated collaboration with INXS's Andrew Farriss, who produced it, Gun's 1997 album *0141 632 6326* saw the band fall apart. Jools was so disappointed with the record's lack of balls that he flat-out refused to promote it. Which explains why its cover featured a solo shot of Mark Rankin rather than a band shot.

Gun had long loved INXS albums such as *Listen Like Thieves* and *Kick*, and on the back of *Word Up* a funkier – but, crucially, still heavy – direction seemed like a great idea. But they just didn't gel with Farriss – "a strange cookie" summarises

MAIN: PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY; INSET: RAY PALMER ARCHIVE/ICONICPIX

Dante Gizzi fronting Gun at the 2017 Stone Free festival in London.

Jools Gizzi and (below) Paul McManus with Gun at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire in 2019.

Dante, saying he seemed aloof and had his own agenda. The exorbitant bill they were running-up at Hook End, a residential studio in a 16th-century Elizabethan Manor in Oxfordshire, didn't help, either. "We became really depressed," says Jools.

"So we split up from Mark, and we ended up going back to Glasgow to open an Italian restaurant with our brother Marco and our sister Carmine," adds Dante."It was hard work, but it helped us escape the madness."

The brothers never stopped writing songs. Soon the restaurant years gave way to El Presidente, a short-lived glam-rock act fronted by Dante, that signed to Sony. The Gizzi brothers didn't know it at the time, but this was perfect training for Gun's inevitable comeback, now with Dante as their singer. In the interim, they'd played a number of charity gigs with former Little Angels singer Toby Jepson fronting the band, but the chemistry was never quite right. When Gun returned with 2012's aptly-titled *Break The Silence*, they were older and wiser. Jools and Dante's parents had passed away within months of each other some years earlier, mum to a sudden heart attack, dad to cancer. Now Gun would be more of a family affair, brothers in arms.

After 2015's *Frantic* and 2017's much-lauded *Favourite Pleasures*, the pandemic years were testing times, too. "I suffer from anxiety anyway," says Jools, "so lockdown was even worse. Me and Dante met every day to try and write, but it just wasn't happening." When the world opened up again, Gun's route back was 2022's *The Calton Songs*, an homage to their Glasgow birthplace, and a timely acoustic re-working of their greatest hits.

Ultimately, though, this was but a dress rehearsal for the brilliant new Gun album *Hombres*. Bedding-down somewhere between 80s era Billy Idol, The Cult and Primal Scream circa their single *Rocks*, *Hombres* finds Jools and Dante's amped-up pop nous reigning supreme across stand-out tracks such as *Take Me Back Home*, *Falling* and *All Fired Up*. Backing vocalists Beverley Skeete, Sarah-Jane Skeete and Mary Pierce – who between them have worked with Chaka Khan, Tom Jones and Robbie Williams – add some soul and gospel-flavoured firepower.

"This record really saved us," summarises Jools. "It's Gun in its finest form."

With a number of songs from *Hombres* already placed in the upcoming Samuel L Jackson film *Damaged*, the Gizzis have the bit between their teeth. With young guitar player Ru Moy now on board alongside Jools, the new line-up – completed by bassist Andy Carr and drummer Paul McManus – played to a packed and exultant Barrowland just days before they spoke to *Classic Rock*.

"We split up from Mark and ended up going back to Glasgow to open an Italian restaurant with our brother and sister."

Dante Gizzi

"Ru's only twenty-eight", says Jools. "He's into Rob Zombie and Blink 182."

"At Barrowlands I kept looking over at him and he was levitating!" adds Dante.

"Afterwards we were like: 'What do you think, then? You in?' Ru goes: 'Of course. What a stupid question!" smiles Jools. "I thought [takes a deep breath]: 'Okay, great! Here we go again…'"

Hombres is out on April 12 via Cooking Vinyl.

KEVIN NIXON x3

SONGS IN THE KEY OF LIFE

Having broken through with 2019's *This Land*, with his new album **Gary Clark Jr**. has thrown off the labels and delivered a musically diverse record while still hitting hard with social commentary.

Words: **Polly Glass**

MIKE MILLER/PRESS

There are several popular images of Gary Clark Jr: the hipster bluesman; the guitar prodigy who made Eric Clapton want to play again; the political firebrand who channelled his experience of the American South into 2019's triple Grammy-winning album *This Land*; the devastated Black man who gave an incendiary response to George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer in Minneapolis in 2020. "We just want to wake up in the morning, go and make the most out of what we can, get what we can for ourselves and for our family, and go the f**k back home," he posted on Instagram at the time. "That's all." And of course there's the most familiar, well-meaning if somewhat reductive label: 'the saviour of the blues'.

"People get that really wrong about me," the 40-year-old Clark tells us. "Although I appreciate that, it's my roots. But if you go back and listen to my old records, I've always been incorporating different styles and genres and ideas on all my records. I've always been that way. I think people have this vision of like: 'Well, I thought that guy was gonna be the next Hendrix.' That wasn't really what I was setting out to do."

He pauses, chuckling. "Or that I take myself real seriously. I think people think I'm serious all the time."

In light of *This Land*, such impressions weren't entirely surprising. The messages in that record were unflinching, uncomfortable, honest. There was fire there, and Clark became associated with that fire. It *was* serious.

Speaking at his ranch outside Austin, Texas, Gary Clark Jr. is a mellowed soul, more keen to talk music than politics. He's a guitar nerd, and a bit of a nerd all round (not the most obvious descriptor, perhaps, for a handsome six-foot-four guy so often described as 'cool'). He enthuses about his new Ibanez guitar ("with a Floyd Rose tremolo, something I'd never done before"); Steve Vai's epic track *For The Love Of God*; his Neve mixing console; time spent barbecuing outdoors with his family during lockdown… All things that mixed the colours of his career-topping new album, *JPEG RAW*, a heady yet hooky fusion of blues, smoky jazz, dirty rock, hip-hop and African flavours, peppered with stellar collaborators.

"For this album I leaned toward really crafting songs and using all kinds of different influences," he says. "We were sitting at home, it was 2020 through to 2023, and we were working on this thing, so there was a lot of time to sit and discover new music."

The fire of *This Land* can still be heard. It's there in the heated guitars juxtaposed with sharp beats and worldly textures. It's there in the political ire of *What About The Children*, his collaboration with Stevie Wonder, conceived as the Black Lives Matter movement rose up in 2020.

Clark hasn't lost his sense of urgency, his refusal to rehash old standards or settle into a comfort zone. But a shift seems to have taken place. The Clark Jr. of *JPEG RAW* is more nuanced, more real, less confined to angry, soapbox-y impressions. An ordinary guy with extraordinary experiences, delving into musical styles that he loves. And, ultimately, he sounds more powerful for it.

"It's kind of yours to digest and you can feel about it how you want," he says with a shrug, when asked what he hopes people will take from the record. "You know, it's kind of open to interpretation after I'm done with it. I hope people enjoy it and come out to the show and rock out with us."

"Stevie saw [my Instagram post] and he's like: 'Hey man, I understand where your heart is, let's write a song together.'"

In 2020, as the world remained at home, Clark started holding weekly barbecues. Using an offset smoker and the best brisket he could get his hands on, the father-of-three slow-cooked meat and thought about life – what the future might hold without music. His wife, Australian model Nicole Trunfio, prepared sides. Their youngest child had just been born. Gary and Nicole joked about opening a restaurant if their careers didn't survive the pandemic.

"Oh yeah, we would be, like: 'Maybe we'll start off with a little food truck and we'll just travel across the country,' you know, stuff like that. Fortunately we got out of that thing and were able to get back out on the road. So we put the restaurant project on the back burner, for now."

Gathered over brisket smoke, records and a few drinks, Clark and his bandmates brainstormed ideas. They listened to Steve Vai, Albert King, Stro Elliott, Eric Johnson and much more. The soul of *JPEG RAW* began to take shape.

"I had taken all these projects on my own, musically," he reflects. "So it was nice to have that teamwork, and that camaraderie. I think that really helped with the direction, the sonic palette of this album."

Meanwhile, Clark also used the enforced at-home time to master music production software Pro Tools and his Neve console, marking the start of a wider-reaching composer/producer role. An early result of that had been *This Is Who We Are*, featuring London-based R&B vocalist Naala, which started life in early 2020. At the time, Clark tossed the song idea aside, but the finished version feels like a capsule taste of the whole record.

"It develops," he says, "it encompasses all the things that I like about music. It's got kind of this orchestral, symphonic movements, kind of dark minor, bluesy vibes, chugging funky rhythm and weird synth, bass and loud guitar riffs."

At the time, Clark's band line-up had changed. "Riff-rock guy" Elijah Ford (ex-Black Crowes guitarist Marc Ford's son) joined on bass. Drummer JJ Johnson had returned from the Tedeschi Trucks Band ("who I love," Clark says). Their lives and influences can all be heard on *JPEG RAW*.

"He [JJ] comes from San Antonio, so he kind of grew up in that punk scene," Clark tells us, "but also is an amazing jazz drummer. So he can do just about anything, which is cool. And Jon Deas [keyboards] comes from a church background, so he's got the soul, the gospel stuff along with the ▷

funky jazz, all the colours, all the crazy new sounds – he's that guy. I love all of it."

Jacob Sciba, co-producer/writer/arranger, brought various jazz and West African influences to the table. Riffy opener *Maktub* (meaning 'it is written' in Arabic) emerged from this, and through conversations with co-writer Sama'an Ashrawi's father, who is of Palestinian descent. All of it hinges on a compelling blues melody.

"He's telling stories about how music helped bring people together, in times of war and despair, the terrible things that happen in life," Clark explains. "And saying: 'Music is the message.' It's very powerful. It was a long conversation."

Such messages are embedded in *JPEG RAW*. *Don't Start*, enriched by guest vocalist Valerie June ("I wanted that funky, swampy southern bluesy but dancy thing happening"), is a highly danceable affair with a subtle polemic that sneaks up on you. *'Better run and hide, better learn to pray/Oh Lord I'm 'bout to kill that man,'* Clark sings.

"It was a conversation about a certain… situation that maybe a few of us have been in," he says with a laugh, a little evasively, "where you felt like doing somebody a little harm. But, you know, luckily that didn't happen, and you got good friends around you to hold you back. But for a minute, you think about doing a little damage."

With the world in such a tumultuous place while he wrote these songs, you'd be right to expect some social commentary. But Clark says a bigger inspiration was the pitfalls of absorbing global events, and the lives of others, online. With three young children, he became especially conscious of the canyon between life shown on social media and in reality. "It's not as cool or glamorous or easy to get to these seemingly unattainable goals as it looks on the internet," he says. "You know, it's tough to not get caught up in it, but I'm really trying hard not to."

Does this album feel more like a product of your own experience, or observation?

"It was observing the world around me, it was a big realisation that…" He thinks about this.

"I was getting a lot of my information on the world through my feed. It was crazy out there, you know, and it still is. But I saw how much I feed my brain through my phone, how much it affects my mood and my disposition, versus when I turn it off and I'm hanging with my kids and they're playing in the yard and my wife's happy and, you know, singing and dancing around the living room, like, 'Okay, *this* is all right, this is cool, I should appreciate this and not stress so much about things that I can't necessarily control.'"

Following Clark's Instagram post about George Floyd's death, Stevie Wonder got in touch. For Clark, who grew up listening to Wonder's records, it was a turning point.

"I was expressing some frustration, you know?" Clark says now of the Instagram post. "And Stevie saw and he's like: 'Hey, man, I feel you do it. You know, I understand where your heart is.' And he's like: 'Let's write a song together.'"

Conversations turned into demos and eventually studio time, and they wound up with *What About The Children*, a super-sweet, funky yet biting tune in the vein of Stevie's own *Living For The City*. It's a bridge between *JPEG RAW*'s heavier, grittier textures and its softer ones.

Gary Clark Jr: a man perceived to be many things, none of which tell the full story.

"We thought we were gonna open up for Boyz II Men, back in the day."

Indeed, across the record there's a lot of sweetness between the sharp edges. The low-lit jazz/soul/hip-hop fusion *Alone Together* features sultry trumpet lines from Keyon Harrold (who played the Miles Davis parts in Don Cheadle's biopic *Miles Ahead*). Dreamy textures drive the atmospheric *Hyperwave*, a song that came about while watching sunsets in Austin, pink, orange and purple skies, deer and antelope in the distance.

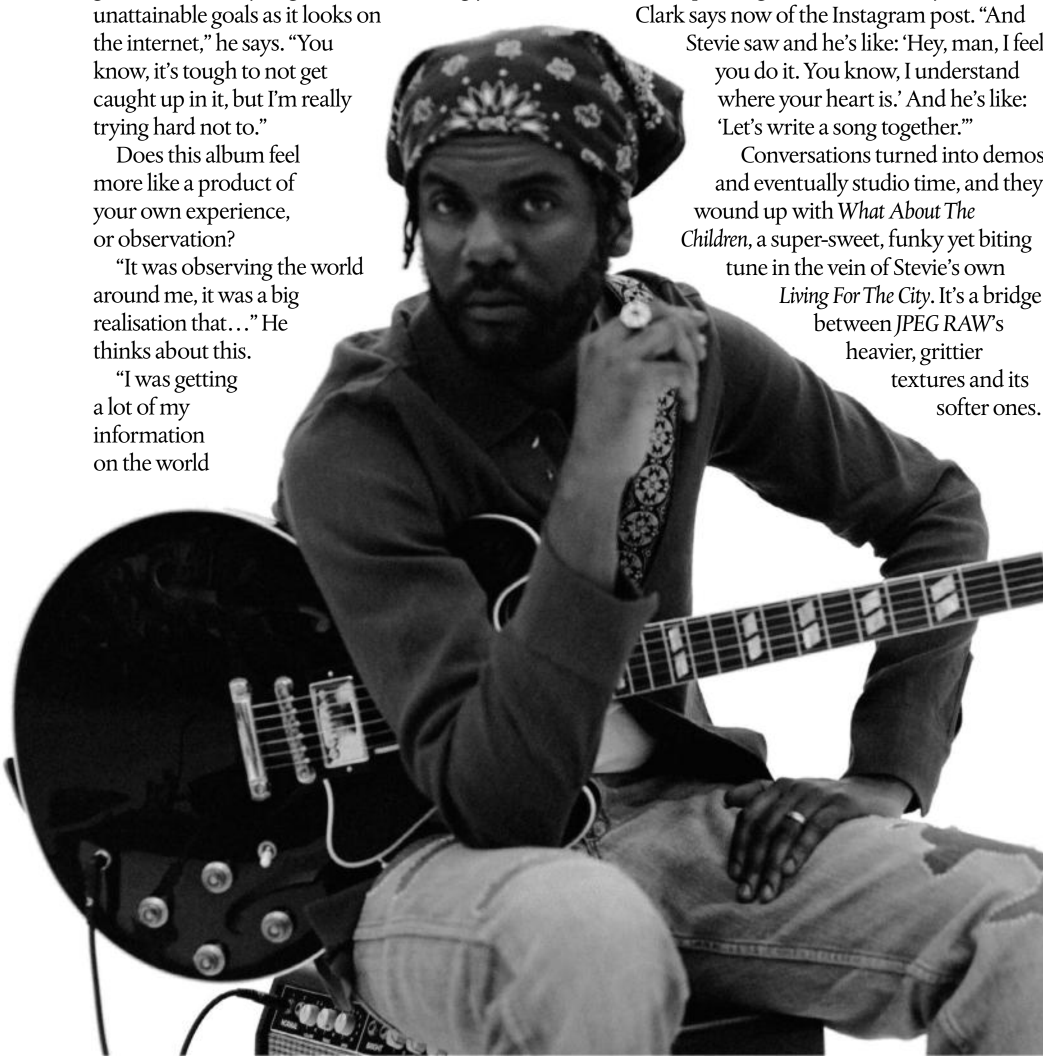
"It was quiet, you can hear the crickets, birds," Clark remembers, sounding happy. "That's not really something that I've had in other studios. I've usually been, like, in Los Angeles or New York, you know, places like that."

Although finishing touches were made in LA, the bulk of *JPEG RAW* came together at Clark's Austin home and producer Mike Elizondo's Arlen Studios in Nashville. You can hear it in the record's balance of colour and space.

"That's kind of out in a rural spot as well," he says of Arlen. "So it was a lot of going outside on breaks and seeing wildlife and horses and beautiful sunsets, green pastures and beautiful oak trees. I guess that had something to do with the atmosphere, the tones, the space, the colours in the record."

This affinity with nature isn't new for Clark. As a child he was in the Boy Scouts and spent a lot of time outdoors, camping and bird watching. He learned to shoot a gun at a young age. His grandfather took them fishing. "Oh yeah, I was a big nerd," Clark says. "Absolutely. I mean, being in Central Texas, we were encouraged to appreciate the hill country. So we would take field trips and go out on boats and search for eagles, take our cook kits and boil up some water, do archery… So I've always been appreciative of quiet rural areas."

You can feel that quiet on *To The End Of The Earth*. Perhaps *JPEG RAW*'s most surprising moment, it's a minute-long dose of crooning by Clark, inspired by John Coltrane collaborator/ baritone Johnny Hartman. It's stripped back,



MIKE MILLER/PRESS

with just his voice and an acoustic guitar. A new sort of spotlight for a guitar hero whose singing gets relatively fewer plaudits.

"I sing all the time," he says. "I grew up in a musical family where we sang all the time. We were also in choir, so I was learning how to sing classical, jazz, modern stuff, barbershop quartets, you know. So I appreciate singing harmonies. I do it all the time."

In high school he and his friend Robbie started a vocal harmony group called Young Soul – a far cry from the heavier sounds he'd come to embrace with his other good friend/guitarist, Eve Monsees. "We thought we were gonna go on the road and open up for Boyz II Men back in the day," he says with a laugh, of Young Soul's ambitions. "But that didn't really work out. I picked up a guitar instead."

All the while, Clark and his four sisters (two older, two younger) were ingesting their father's copies of Stevie Wonder's albums *Innervisions* and *Songs In The Key Of Life*, along with his memories of seeing Parliament and Carlos Santana in Oakland, California, when he lived there in the 70s.

Some of these formative influences come full-circle on *JPEG RAW*: the slinky *Funk Witch U* features Parliament mastermind George Clinton; on the aforementioned *What About The Children* it's Clark's sisters on backing vocals. "It was really cool, me and my sisters on a song with Stevie Wonder," he enthuses. "I played it for my dad and he teared up a little bit."

"I think people have this vision of like: 'Well, I thought that guy was gonna be the next Hendrix.'"

Looking forward, his hopes revolve around learning: composing, getting to grips with music theory, honing his craft. "That's not for [my] career or anything," he says, "that's just me wanting to better myself as a musician."

Beyond that, who knows? After a lifetime of labels, there's a sense of Clark coming back to his truest ones. Gary Clark Jr. the music lover. The guitar nerd. The husband and father. The human being.

Still, he does have some other ideas.

"I want to be a photographer for the *National Geographic*," he says affirmatively. "Or be a camera guy for that show *Earth*; I want to catch the mysterious snow leopard. I want to be one of those guys. I'm already on my way." He chuckles again. "My wife is a little bit concerned with the camera gear I've been purchasing…"

JPEG RAW is out now via Warner Records.

Gary Clark Jr.: not someone who tends to look at the world through rose-tinted glasses.

The Hot List

THE ESSENTIAL NEW ROCK TRACKS YOU NEED TO HEAR THIS MONTH AND THE BANDS TO HAVE ON YOUR RADAR

EBRU YILDIZ/PRESS

With 2024 very much under way, our inboxes have been brimming with music from rock's newest voices, under-the-radar talents and returning favourites. This month we've dipped into all those areas – sifting through the great, the 'fine', the dreadful and just about everything in between – to bring you the crème de la crème of the moment, from hard-rocking Brits to Louisiana freakniks, bluesy Nigeriens, a hotly tipped Mexican sister trio and much more. And while we'd never be ones to judge a book (or an artist) principally by its cover, you can't deny that many of this month's Hot Listers have pretty fucking great 'covers' – and that's no bad thing. Does presentation maketh the band? Or at least have some bearing on how we, as listeners, ingest them? Of course it does.

Check out this lot, and for more every week visit classicrockmagazine.com

Mdou Moctar

Funeral For Justice

The Sahara's 21st-century answer to Jimi Hendrix returns with the scorching title track from his next album (out in May). *Funeral For Justice* finds the Niger-based blues maverick and his band beefing up the hot, heady cocktail that propelled 2021's excellent *Afrique Victime*, creating a mini-epic of sorts that feels both urgent and transportive – grabbing your attention and sending you to far-off landscapes in one propulsive breath. One of rock's most genuinely interesting, commanding presences.

mdoumoctar.com

Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse
Satisfy Your Queen

With roots in Louisiana, California and the UK, Beaux Gris Gris & The Apocalypse have always applied an eclectic, vivid approach to classic blues and rock'n'roll tropes – plus killer videos, masterminded in-house. *Satisfy Your Queen* finds them carrying on in that tradition with a hard shot of full-pelt, no-mercy blues rock, spiced up with freakoid undertones and wry lyrical touches (*'You're so sussie like a French dessert,'* croons Louisiana-born singer Greta Valenti, looking like a mardi-gras vampire with her fangs and Technicolor glamourpuss chic). Cool, sexy and fun. Catch them live in the UK in April.
beauxgrisgris.com

Dan Byrne *Like Animals*

Fans of the emotive, sincere punch of Those Damn Crows and Shinedown, listen in. And if you're thinking Dan Byrne looks familiar, the Liverpudlian singer-songwriter used to front NWOCR favourites Revival Black. Now flying solo, here he embraces a slick, bright yet beefy brand of modern hard rock. "Yeah, there were a few raised eyebrows", Byrne says, of his decision to leave the band. "The plain fact was, the idea of doing my own thing, fully realising my musical ideas and taking full responsibility for them became absolute."
danbyrne.co

The Warning *S!CK*

Mexican sister trio The Warning have already opened for Foo Fighters, Muse, Halestorm and other similarly hard-hitting big cheeses. Now they're teeing up for a massive headline tour with this shot-in-the-arm of propulsive, fire-spitting hard rock. Like the sound of that? The tour comes to the UK in April, including a show at London's Kentish Town Forum. Are they about to do a Greta Van Fleet, or a Maneskin, and put rock'n'roll through the roof? Watch this space and see…
thewarningband.com

BEAUX GRIS GRIS & THE APOCALYPSE: KAELIN DAVIS/PRESS; DAN BYRNE: ROB BLACKHAM/PRESS

Joanne Shaw Taylor
Heavy Soul

Soulful blues, now, from one of the genre's most commanding 21st-century advocates. We've called Joanne the UK's answer to Joe Bonamassa before, and she makes good on that here – albeit with her own signature vocal husk and loose, classy chops. *Heavy Soul* is the title track from the Black Country native's next album (due out in June), a rich, honeyed marriage of blues-rock guitar and soulful pop sensibilities. "For me, it was about connecting the dots from [her 2022 album] *Nobody's Fool* back into the blues," Joanne says. "It's a mix of contemporary soul-pop and roots music."
joanneshawtaylor.com

Shane Smith & The Saints
Book Of Joe

Mixing the fire and fervour of the American Bible Belt with a rocky fusion of Americana, bluegrass and folk sensibilities, Austin-based outlaws Shane Smith & The Saints play roots music of beguiling depth and intrigue, all of it stirred together with frontman Smith's gorgeous velvet-'n'-gravel baritone. *Book Of Joe*, the opening track from their latest album *Norther*, is a fine example of all this, marrying smokey guitar crunch with fiddle lines, shot through with big-stage blue-collar crescendos (think Chris Stapleton with more of an Appalachian bent). Catch them live in the UK in May.
shanesmithmusic.com

JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR: STACIE HUCKEBA/PRESS; SHANE SMITH & THE SAINTS: DAVID WELLS/PRESS

The Middlenight Men
The Middlenight Men Theme

Nick Hughes (also in Terrorvision, on trumpet, and formerly of the Role Models, Love Zombies and others) and his band of masked pop-rock crusaders come bearing the first taste of their second album, *Issue 2*. Bold, bright and fizzing, *The Middlenight Men Theme* is a Wildhearts-esque cocktail of heavy bite and sugar, with a bittersweet aftertaste, all framed in a gleefully cartoon-minded, 90s-tastic video narrative. Nice.
themiddlenightmen.com

Jack J Hutchinson
*Don't Let The F***ers Get You Down*

On his new album *Battles*, Jack J Hutchinson leaned further into the hard rock side of his bluesy arsenal. But it's the rich, rootsy jangle and heft of *Don't Let The F***ers Get You Down* that really grabbed us – think Guns N' Roses raiding The Black Crowes' wardrobe. "Working with Josiah [J Manning, producer/Kris Barras sideman] was an eye-opener," Jack has said. "He encouraged me to write meaningful lyrics more upliftingly, and that's what this new music is. It felt like unlocking who I am as an artist."
jackjhutchinsonmusic.com

And keep an ear out for...
The Courettes

Anyone crying out for rock'n'roll like they used to make it (i.e. back in the 50s and swinging-est 60s), complete with the production values and wardrobe of the age, would do well to check out The Courettes if they haven't already. In an early taste of their next album *The Soul Of The Fabulous Courettes* (coming out in September), this ultra-stylish R&B duo are on spectacularly sassy, groovy form on toe-tapping, tambourine-shaking party track *Shake!*. It finds wife-and-husband Flavia (vocals/guitar) and Martin (drums) resummoning their established cocktail of Cramps-meets-Stooges verve and beehive-haired rock'n'roll, and channelling it into one of their catchiest pieces yet. Beautifully retro.
thecourettes.com

JACK J HUTCHINSON: ROB BLACKHAM/PRESS; THE MIDDLENIGHT MEN: PAUL HARRIES/PRESS

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

'CHEROKEE MOON' IS THE SEQUEL TO THE ACCLAIMED CIRCLE OF FRIENDS ALBUM 'THE GARDEN'

AN 80'S ROCK MASTERCLASS WITH AN ALL-STAR CAST OF VOCALISTS!

RELEASED ON MARCH 22ND VIA ESCAPE MUSIC

ROBIN BECK JEFF SCOTT SOTO TANYA RIZKALA ROBIN McAULEY MARK BOALS HARRY HESS DARBY MILLS

NEW RELEASE

PERSEUS - INTO THE SILENCE

Out 19th April

CD catalogue No: ESM386

Perseus is a power metal band formed in 2011 in Brindisi (Puglia, Southern Italy) from the ashes of two local bands: "Hastings" (prog-metal, openers for Athena and Eldritch) and "Defenders of the Faith" (Judas Priest tribute band). Within an already well-explored genre, Perseus carved out their own personal space, taking inspiration from the old metal school of bands like Judas Priest, Manowar and Queensryche, without disdaining influences from more "Avant-Gardes" bands such as Kamelot or the italian Rhapsody Of Fire and Labyrinth.

The Italian melodic tradition of bel canto and nice melodies are mixed with powerful riffs. The more intimate moments of the songs are highlighted using acoustic guitars and keyboards. Passion, suffering, joy, love, damnation, redemption, etc., are the predominant themes expressed in the lyrics.

CD limited to 1000 copies, all individually numbered.

email: contact@escape-music.com

All titles are also available to download via iTunes, Napster, Spotify, and Amazon

CARGO RECORDS

Distributed via Cargo Records UK

THE HARD STUFF
The Ultimate ROCK REVIEWS Section

16 PAGES · 100% ROCK

Classic Rock Ratings

- A Classic
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Above Average
- Average
- Below Par
- A Disappointment
- Pants
- Pish

Ingredients:

p72 Albums
p82 Reissues
p86 Multimedia
p88 Buyer's Guide

Edited By Ian Fortnam
ian.fortnam@futurenet.com

BRIAN ARIS/PRESS

p82

Michael Schenker Group

Early-80s material gets packed into six-CD box.

Pearl Jam

Dark Matter MONKEYWRENCH

There's vim and vigour aplenty from the Seattle survivors on album number 12.

It's impossible to approach a new Pearl Jam album without pausing to think of the entire scene that they came from. Since their last release, 2020's *Gigaton*, we've lost Screaming Trees frontman Mark Lanegan, following the tragic demise of Kurt Cobain, Layne Staley, Chris Cornell and Scott Weiland, making Eddie Vedder the last of the big-name male grunge singers standing. He always seemed the most outside of the Seattle insiders group, though, less cursed with the lure of addiction or having skin just a layer too thin to cope with the pressures of fame and the world at large. There were always punk ethics in their dealings with the rock machine, yes, but Pearl Jam were unashamedly stadium-ready from day one, which could well be the secret to their longevity.

More than three decades in, *Dark Matter* finds them retracing their footsteps, with producer Andrew Watt (who recently worked with the Rolling Stones – a band with even more history – on their comeback album *Hackney Diamonds*) encouraging them to revisit and reevaluate the fiery, histrionic, dramatic works from their earliest and most loved albums: *Ten*, *Vs* and *Vitalogy*. It's all there from the instantly recognisable opening jangle of *Scared Of Fear*, drummer Matt Cameron giving it that familiar colossal wallop to shock the whole thing into life, Vedder, in fine voice, looking back on the idealistic – yet often acerbic – scene that spawned them and acknowledging the loss and the pain the era left in its wake. It's the essence of Pearl Jam bottled, shook up and uncorked, with Mike McCready's Catherine wheel of guitar licks hogging attention unapologetically.

DANNY CLINCH/PRESS

The personal-approach flip-side to the clatter of *Scared Of Fear* comes in the shape of *Something Special*, probably the band's most openly sentimental song ever. A jaunty, *Itchycoo Park* of a musical amble, it finds the frontman offering fatherly advice, support and pure love to his young daughters. '*We believe in you*,' he croons, setting the song up as their very own take on David Bowie's *Kooks*, and somehow coming across as sweet rather than nauseating.

Something Special, along with the catchy *Wreckage* – a tasteful, gentle classic rock confection that echoes Tom Petty's melodicism, R.E.M.'s swooning mid-90s strings and even touches of *Fast Car* by Tracy Chapman – provide the more delicate strands of the record, the latter a much more upbeat sibling of *Daughter* from *Vs* (although the post-disaster lyrics paint an entirely darker picture). But elsewhere they've gone out of their way to turn up the dial and make things as heavy as possible, not least on the title track. It's an explosion of pounding drums, jabbing riffs, and Vedder's fury contained by that beautifully deep vocal delivery, hitting out at the status quo and offering the sober warning: '*Once heard it said, and it stuck in my head, arrested the press, no one know what happened next.*' At a time when dark forces are conspiring to gag anyone attempting to hold them to account, it's a potent statement. *Running*, meanwhile, is a bass-heavy, jagged, punky rant in the mould of *Spin The Black Circle*, completely nonsensical (it seems to be something to do with sewage) but entirely magnetic.

Vedder has come in for some stick in recent years for sometimes being indecipherable, but his voice is an astonishingly powerful instrument, full of soul, anger, compassion and intelligence. And the merciless duo of guitarists Mike McCready and Stone Gossard are taking no prisoners here, particularly the former. From the new-wave guitar line – and matching, Peter Hooky bass from Jeff Ament – of swooning love song *Won't Tell* to the trademark fret fireworks of *Upper Hand* – a song that fades cinematically into view, dark, echoey and nostalgic – he is an absolute powerhouse, a joy to behold.

That Pearl Jam have not only survived all these years, but thrived, taking on conglomerates and expectations along the way and continuing to draw vast crowds, is something to be celebrated. Especially as so many of their contemporaries were cruelly denied the chance to do so. With *Dark Matter*, while it could never hope to compete with the incendiary brilliance of their debut and its follow-up, they've painted a portrait of a band comfortable in their own skin, knowledgeable about their own strengths, and capable of not only looking back at what was great about the work they made as young men but also recapturing some of the magic that set them on – and kept them on – their path to the top of the game. They have directly inspired some truly dire pretenders to the throne in the intervening years, but *Dark Matter* sees them sweep those bands away, and reset and reclaim their own signature sound.

'*Dark Matter* sees them reset and reclaim their own signature sound.'

Emma Johnston

Cock Sparrer

Hand On Heart CHERRY RED

Street-punk progenitors stand firm.

Uncannily ageless, the most widely respected, enduringly influential yet bizarrely overlooked punk band in the genre's history have produced an eighth album (52 years into their career) that's as strong, if not stronger, than anything they've ever done.

An East End institution, they continue to be the most unpretentious, most entirely street street-punk band of them all. The blurring hardcore riffs, the ubiquitous 'woah-oh'-ing mob vocals, the casually deployed anthemic choruses are all pretty par for the course. The Sparrer's deeply indebted spiritual progeny (Rancid, Dropkick Murphys et al) have long-since mastered the band's core MO, but what marks out the five-piece (all four original '72 founders and a newbie rhythm guitarist of a mere 31 years standing) as a mono-generic species is their lyrical content (terrace camaraderie, pub wisdom, loyalty, buying your round, standing your ground) all delivered by Colin McFaull's unwavering yet emotive, stentorian vocal. Aside from *My Forgotten Dream*'s unexpected yet effective strings, this is Cock Sparrer business as usual, playing to their strengths. The song titles (*With My Hand On My Heart, I Belong To You, Here We Stand*) ultimately say it all.

All hail the street-punk Iron Maiden.

Ian Fortnam

Sheer Mag

Playing Favorites THIRD MAN

Third album from Philadelphia four-piece.

History plays tricks on the mind. Take Sheer Mag. On one level they're from the past. There's Tina Halladay's Brody Dalle-esque vocals, a love of *Tusk*-era Fleetwood Mac, a riot-grrrl undertow, 10cc-style quirkiness and Kyle Seely's unbridled, time-transcending guitars. More specifically, *I Gotta Go* almost evokes Elliott Randall's sizzling guitar solo on Steely Dan's *Reelin' In The Years*; there are doo-wop backing vocals on *When You Get Back*; *Moonstruck* isn't the only moment to suggest Pilot's *January*; *Eat It And Beat It* pitches its tent somewhere between Slade and Alice Cooper.

So far, so (delightfully) derivative. But there's a twist. For all that they've taken from others – someone here clearly has a wonderful record collection – Sheer Mag are their own men. They don't even sound dated.

They're urgent on the title track, where Halladay rattles out rhythm guitarist Matt Palmer's lyrics with a conviction bordering on zealous, but she's more considered on *Don't Come Lookin'*, which somehow manages to combine raw with tasteful. All rock life is somewhere in this glorious melange.

They're not perfect, of course. *Playing Favorites* lacks the career-defining standout that will catapult them into a bigger league, and sometimes the whole is less than the sum of its intriguing parts. They're well on their way, though.

John Aizlewood

Feeder

Black/Red BIG TEETH MUSIC

Expansive double album filled with ambition, expression and attitude.

There's a lot to be said for a band releasing their first double album late in their career, and into a landscape where anything more than an EP can struggle to find its place on Spotify. There's something of an Indian summer feel around Feeder with 2019's vibrant *Tallulah* and 2022's very welcome *Torpedo* both showing something of the prickly energy that surrounded the band when we all spent a summer jumping up and down to *Buck Rogers*.

It's a sadly familiar story: success, suicide, a career riding high or in the commercial doldrums. But, to Feeder's credit, this record sounds as box-fresh as they did all the way back when. It was partly written in lockdown, which shows in the occasional bout of muddy introspection, but Grant Nicholas is on something of a creative flyer in songs like the twisting *Lost In The Wilderness* and the blistering, choppy pop of songs like *Scream* and the arm-waving *ELF*. You can only sit back, sigh and admire their hwyl.

Philip Wilding

MARIANNE HARRIS/PRESS

Hawkwind

Stories From Time And Space *CHERRY RED*

Space ace.

Hawkwind aren't normally associated with teenage trauma, but here's a story for you. It's 1972, and a young fan (with the initials GB) is getting ready to play the *Greasy Truckers Party* album on his stereo – specifically the Hawks tracks *Master Of The Universe* and *Born To Go*. The doorbell rings, and the distracted fan exits the room and goes to the door, leaving the LP on the mantelpiece above a blazing log fire. The vinyl immediately begins to droop over the edge of the shelf, like something out of a Salvador Dali painting. *Greasy Truckers* becomes Melty Fuckers…

The good news is that Hawkwind are still warped – not to say warp-driven – after all these lightyears.

With Dave Brock the last man standing (correction: last spaceman floating), *Stories From Time And Space*, their thirty-sixth studio album, comes highly recommended. It ebbs and flows, niggles and jars, throbs and vibrates like some pulsating interplanetary organism. It's a complete, rounded work; the 13 tracks dovetail into each other perfectly. Having said that, you never know what's round the corner. Take the first two songs. The bleak cosmic lament of *Our Lives Can't Last Forever* gives way to *The Starship (One Love One Life)*, positively lighthearted by comparison. Brock delivers a dense chug-guitar meltdown before the cheesy air-steward announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, we are heading for Galaxy 117 – it's a place that's just like heaven. Safe journey!" It's a bit Bonzo Dog – in a good way. There's more trippy humour in the whirling, spiralling *The Tracker*, which proves aliens *do* exist. The ending is hilariously lackadaisical: *'It's time for me to go to bed now, we've successfully managed to contact another race.'*

The instrumental tracks work terrifically: *Re-generate* resembles a harrowing journey through an ancient computer's innards; *The Black Sea* could be the soundtrack to a delicate brain operation; *Underwater City* is a close relation of Black Sabbath's *Fluff*.

There are two clear standouts. *A Traveller Of Time And Space* could be described as Big Country-go-galactic, and concerns a futuristic gravedigger who sends a cargo of human waste into the sun: *'Time to leave, explosions have begun.'* Even better is *Frozen In Time*, a sparse, hypnotic love song: *'I thought I saw you smile, but it was just the sun shining in your eyes, frozen in sweet surprise.'* This from the band that made you batten down the hatches in case of *Sonic Attack*? Who would've thought it.

Geoff Barton

Mark Knopfler

One Deep River

BRITISH GROVE/EMI

Straits mainman delivers one of his best solo records.

To paraphrase Kenneth Tynan on Eugene Ionesco, once you've heard all of Mark Knopfler's solo albums, you've heard one of them. There's one or two reflective world-weary ballads, a couple of reflective world-weary toe tappers, and some finely wrought reflective world-weary character studies that are self-contained short stories. Because the thing about Knopfler's solo albums – of which this is the tenth, if you don't count soundtracks – is that it doesn't matter that they're all cut from the same cloth, because it's a brilliant cloth, part Dylan, part folk, part stadium melancholy.

One Deep River is one of Knopfler's best. These are gorgeous songs, sung in a voice that sounds like it's lived a life that's full, and the character songs – which Knopfler has excelled at since *Sultans Of Swing* – are as poignant as ever. Roll on album number 11.

David Quantick

James

Yummy *VIRGIN*

Manchester alt.rock mainstays teach the whipper-snappers a thing or two about 2024.

Well might Tim Booth rage against ageist stereotypes on *Yummy*'s most pumped and agile alt.rocker *Rogue*, rattling through a catalogue of his colourful former lives – punk, samurai, guru, saint and more – and declaring himself, at 64, *'still mesmerised by cleavage'*. There are, after all, bands a third of James's age who struggle to document the social zeitgeist as astutely and inventively as Manchester's art-rock legends.

This eighteenth album, continuing the sophisticated air of their second era with its merger of plush future-rock, graceful gospel folk and organic electro-pop, addresses our subservience to technology (*Mobile God*), the Gen Z mental health crisis (*Stay*), democracy's façade (*Our World*) and the desperate day-to-day struggle of life in post-Truss Britain (*Way Over Your Head*). Conspiracy theory groover *Hey* even gives credence to recent CIA UFO whistleblowing, although the deep philosophising of *Is This Love* and *Life's A Fucking Miracle* are, emotionally speaking, far more cosmic. When *Yummy* finally confronts the reaper on the wry, fearless *Folks*, it's in the style of a bombastic 1950s prom ballad beamed in from a distant galaxy, warps and all. That's James – reinventing against the dying of the light.

Mark Beaumont

Kris Barras Band

Halo Effect *EARACHE*

Heavy but clever.

Getting harder and heavier with each album, Devon's Kris Barras Band come flying out of the blocks on this fourth release with a succession of tough riffs and memorable choruses. But what really sets it apart from their previous album, *Death Valley Paradise*, is the smart production that maintains a clarity of sound, no matter how big the riffs and choruses get. It also gives their musicianship a chance to shine.

Unbreakable may be something of a headbangers' ball, but the lyrics make clear just why the singer is not about to break, and there's a whole range of varied techniques packed into the brief but incendiary guitar solo. Likewise the solid riffs and dynamic chorus of *Savages*, which is about kicking back against the put-downs, leave enough room to work in some clever electronic effects.

Hugh Fielder

Noah And The Loners

A Desolate Warning

MARSHALL

London teens give the UK punk scene a shot of adrenalin.

London newcomers Noah And The Loners have ticked every single box on the Future Of British Punk checklist. They're terrifyingly, upsettingly young, looking like they've just stepped out of double maths. They're absolutely furious with the current government, which, given the fact they're coming of age at a deeply shitty time in British politics, makes their calls on blazing, punchy opener *Crash Landing* for Parliament to be burned to the ground entirely reasonable. When they're not calling out the powers that be,

they're stewing in adolescent angst. And they swear with the kind of relish that suggests it's not long since they'd have been grounded for it, frontman Noah Lonergan spitting out cockney 'fuck's with likeable intensity.

With five adrenalin-fuelled tracks clocking in at less than 12 minutes in total, this debut EP is riotous in sound and intent, crackling with energy and riding a wave of nagging, insistent, riff-stuffed melodies. The shape of punk to come? It's probably best not to bet against it.

Emma Johnston

Junkyard Drive

Look At Me Now MIGHTY MUSIC

Hard-rocking Danes return refreshed.

With a radical line-up change – two new guitarists, no less – you might think Junkyard Drive would need a bit of time to regroup and reassess. Not a bit of it. Following up 2022's *Electric Love*, *Look At Me Now* finds Oliver Hartmann and Kristoffer Kristensen on guitars and delivers 10 quality tracks of garage hard rock, a bit punk around the edges, not unlike The Hellacopters but focused on tight riffs and instantly memorable choruses. *Black Wolf* pushes the envelope a tad with its ethereal verses and explosive chorus, the softly dreaming *Afterglow* is a beautifully peaceful way to close proceedings, while *Somewhere To Hide*, *Shoot From The Hip*, *Tearaway*, *Pipe Down* and the thundering swagger of *Beauty Fool* are primal bruisers, strong on melody and designed to be enjoyed at paint-stripping volume. Pacey, imaginative and brimming with energy, *Look At Me Now* delivers on all fronts.

Essi Berelian

KMFDM

Let Go METROPOLIS

German beat tyrants take a lighter touch for once.

Let Go is KMFDM's twenty-third (!) full-length album, and for loud-mouthed pundits who say they release the same album every two years, this one's a true curve ball.

KMFDM's classic sound has been evolving since their last true electro-metal album, 2017's *Hell Yeah*. They've subsequently shaved off some of their clanging 90s industrial edge and have been leaning harder into pop melodies. More than half of *Let Go* sounds like standard synth-pop, albeit with their signature 'ultra-heavy beat'.

It opens with two classic metallic bangers: the scorching title track and the punchy, dancefloor-destroying *Push*. But it's all a bit of a bait and switch, because tracks like *Airhead*, *Turn The Light On* and *Touch* abandon the disco-metal trappings completely, offering instead bubbling synths, funky rhythms and breathy vocals.

For some this album will be the gulp of fresh air they've been waiting for. The headbangers, however, will wonder where all the good times have gone.

Sleazegrinder

Big Scenic Nowhere

The Waydown

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Prog-stoner supergroup dig deep once again.

Anyone captivated by the power and invention of BSN's 2021 album *The Long Morrow* will certainly want to plug into the dreamy, lysergic soundscapes conjured up on *The Waydown*.

Following their established creative process of editing epic jams into songs, Bob Balch (Fu Manchu), Tony Reed (Mos Generator), Gary Arce and Bill Stinson (both Yawning Man) deliver yet another desert sun-drenched collection of progressive hard rock and ambient noodling. It might lack a mega set piece like *The Long Morrow*'s immense title track, but the quality across the album is undeniable. The lengthy opening title track and languid closer *100* both drift delightfully on incandescent solar winds, while Reed's atmospheric production gives *Summer Teeth*, *Surf Western* and *Bleed On* an addictive warm glow, and then there's an unexpected but most welcome cover of Hall & Oates's *Sara Smile*, smoothly soulful and fitting perfectly.

This super-talented bunch just get better and better.

Essi Berelian

James Mastro

Dawn Of A New Error

MPRESS

Shadows-dwelling sideman steps into the light.

The life of a sideman is never easy, overshadowed by the famous employer or more talented star. James Mastro is no exception. Despite his obvious talents, his name will always be followed by someone else's in brackets – in his case Ian Hunter or Patti Smith or Alejandro Escovedo, all of whom he has played for or led road bands for. And even when it's time to call in favours – as Mastro does here with a guest appearance by Hunter on this album's fantastic *The Wrong Song* – people are listening out for the guest star.

So it's time for the likes of us to set all that aside and listen to *Dawn Of A New Error* for what it is: a rocking triumph where the sideman steps out into the limelight. '*I'm not a general or a leader of men*,' he might sing, but on the evidence of this album, he is.

David Quantick

Alejandro Escovedo

Echo Dancing YEP ROC

Cult journeyman scuffs up his career highlights.

While the ubiquitous Taylor Swift basks in the spotlight for taking control of her earlier material by re-recording it, she's certainly not the first. From early pioneers the Everly Brothers, through to the shape-shifting David Bowie and the iTunes-bothering U2 and all points in between, the practice shows absolutely no signs of abating.

Ergo *Echo Dancing*, which finds roots rocker Alejandro Escovedo electing to revisit key points of his career. But this is no straightforward exercise in making cover songs sound just so. Instead he elects to drag his material through the dirt, and the ramped layers of fuzz and distortion actually improve on the originals. *Too Many Tears* adds extra atmospherics, the frayed edges of *Swallows Of San Juan* add emotional heft, while *Bury Me*'s sense of parched menace sums up this collection's flavour.

Julian Marszalek

ROUND-UP: BLUES

By Henry Yates

The Black Keys: catchy tunes and their most sociable album yet.

JIM HERRINGTON/PRESS

The Black Keys

Ohio Players NONESUCH

Two decades after Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney stripped the blues-band format back to the bone, the Ohio duo's twelfth album is their most sociable yet, with a guest list that includes Beck, Noel Gallagher, a brace of Memphis rappers and more besides. If you haven't yet heard the album's lead single *Beautiful People (Stay High)*, rectify that. It's a tearaway slice of white-boy soul, so immediate that you'll join the cast-of-thousands vocal by the second chorus. The rest of *Ohio Players* is almost as good, with the greasy bass line of opener *This Is Nowhere* setting up a record that is strikingly funky. *On The Game* (the best of Gallagher's three contributions) is a classy honey-crunch jangler, the snake-hipped *Please Me (Till I'm Satisfied)* is anointed by the same voodoo priest as the Stones' *Sympathy For The Devil*, while *Don't Let Me Go* splices Nick Cave's *Red Right Hand* with the Four Tops' Motown classic *Reach Out I'll Be There*.

Armed with tunes this catchy, if The Black Keys aren't careful they'll be the biggest band in the world all over again.

Susan Santos

Sonora SELF-RELEASED

Plenty of musicians have tried to capture the desert, but this is one of the most evocative in recent memory, the Madrid guitarist's heavy grooves conjuring an atmosphere of beauty and danger, her lyrics nodding to burnished sands and banditos. Try lead single *Hot Rod Lady*, its piston-pump momentum moving like a *Mad Max* motorcade, and dive deeper from there.

Katie Henry

Get Goin' RUF

The New Jersey multi-instrumentalist set the pace with 2022's *On My Way*, now *Get Goin'* builds the momentum for one of Ruf's best young signings. There's muscle on cuts like confessional *Love Like Kerosene* ('*I been sleeping with the bottle, he's not finished with me yet*'), while the breeziness of the country-touched *Get Goin' Get Gone* belies the hard-won wisdom within.

Jack J Hutchinson

Battles SELF-RELEASED

Blues is still a strand of Hutchinson's modus operandi, but he's far too questing a songwriter to bow to its dogma, and *Battles* sprawls from knuckle-popping thrash to power ballads. Sung at times with the edgy, urgent sneer of a young Liam Gallagher, it's another emphatic step up from an everyman performer who could be very special indeed.

Cedric Burnside

Hill Country Love

PROVOGUE/MASCOT

Having played drums from age 13 for his storied late grandfather R.L. Burnside, it falls to solo artist Cedric and his fellow holdouts to keep the heritage of the North Mississippi hill music alive. Following 2021's Grammy-winning *I Be Trying*, this stellar collection of rough, rustic songs will make urbanites cream over its earthy authenticity.

Gary Clark Jr

Jpeg Raw WARNER

A career high from the Texan electric blues multi-instrumentalist.

From day one, it was obvious that Gary Clark Jr was never going to be boxed in by the trad confines of the blues world that he initially called home. With 2019's *This Land* he spread his creative wings to spectacular effect – the fact that it bagged Grammy awards for best blues album as well as best rock song and best rock performance shows how he sent those genre boundaries tumbling down. But *Jpeg Raw*, his first album in five years, is without doubt his finest work to date, and the most musically diverse.

Jazz, hip-hop, rock'n'roll, African beats, soul… nothing is off limits in a dizzying array of influences and styles mixed with the precision of a master of his craft. It's lyrically smart too, the urgent, marching, adrenaline-and-fuzz-fuelled opener *Maktub* sending out a rallying cry for revolution from the off, while the uneasy jazz-club swing of the title track decries the impersonal, fake, filtered modern life of mobile-phone imprisonment.

The album flows beautifully, as that electrifying opener morphs to more reflective and then ultimately more funky ground, an entire work envisaged to be enjoyed as a whole journey. And, as ever, Clark's choice of collaborators is impeccable, most notably on *What About The Children*, on which he teams up with Stevie Wonder to craft a bouncing, sunny slice of joyous, old-school R&B that could have been beamed in straight from the great man's superlative *Innervisions*, harmonica, hand claps and all. Meanwhile, George Clinton arrives to add his bassy tones for the slinky, seductive flurry of funk on *Funk Witch U*, trumpeter Kenyon Harrold adds an introspective feel to the mournful soul of *Alone Together*, and British vocalist Naala brings a sense of drama to the theatrical *This Is Who We Are*. But it's Clark's own transformation from song to song that is mesmerising, spitting hip-hop-infused rock decrees one minute, crooning like a Rat Pack legend the next, before sliding into a sweet, soul falsetto.

Jpeg Raw is simultaneously a timeless album, with a magpie's talent for picking the brightest gems of rock history, and a very, very modern concern, with its clear-eyed view of American society in 2024. The fact that musicians are still having to highlight social injustices after all this time is an indicator of how far we haven't come since the originators stood up to be heard all those years ago, but here, Clark has more than earned his place among them. This album is the high point of his career, and it could be one of the finest albums you'll hear this year too.

Emma Johnston

Gun

Hombres COOKING VINYL

Cocky and reloaded. Firing on all six again.

In the 40 years since the Glaswegian band's second album *Gallus* graced the UK Top 10, Gun have stalled and rebuilt more than once. Even since 2010 – when it dawned on the Gizzi brothers that the new singer their band needed had been in the band all along, called Dante and playing bass alongside his sibling guitarist Jools – studio albums have been so-so. But, finally, *Hombres* sounds like a band remembering where they buried the treasure.

The opening salvo of *All Fired Up*, *Boys Don't Cry* (featuring a neat solo by new guitarist 'Ru' Macfarlane), the thumping *Take Me Back Home* and *Fake Life* are all *classic* Gun. Inevitably, that suggests Jools and Dante are guilty of re-framing their first three albums – but easy to forgive because *Hombres* sparkles. Maybe we didn't need three bonus tracks added to the 10 nominated strongest, but even track 12, *Wrong To Be Right*, is joyously infectious.

Neil Jeffries

Sleepytime Gorilla Museum

Of The Last Human Being

AVANT NIGHT

California mavericks unveil a deranged new exhibit.

Fans of supremely weird music will already know about Sleepytime Gorilla Museum. A shadowy, Dadaist collective from Oakland, California, these certified loonbags have been silent for 17 years, but return in the finest form imaginable on their fourth full-length record.

Of The Last Human Being doesn't exactly pick up where 2007's *In Glorious Time* left off, but the band's subversive, genre-mashing and crazed art-metal freakouts are as wildly bizarre as ever. Describing tracks like *Salamander In Two Worlds* and *Hush* is like nailing jelly to the wall; lurching sludge, left-field chamber music, demented math-rock, crazed surrealism and an assortment of home-made instruments (the electric pancreas!) are all grist to the ensemble's sanity-defying mill.

For the uninitiated, Mr. Bungle's *Disco Volante* and the entire Rock In Opposition movement are solid reference points, but SGM are a stoically unique proposition. Bewildering and affecting in equal measure, this is genius untamed.

Dom Lawson

Sons Of Liberty

The Detail Is In The Devil

SELF-RELEASED

Classic southern rock via Bristol.

Unsurprisingly lumped into the so-called New Wave Of Classic Rock, Sons Of Liberty have built their burgeoning reputation on strong melodies and hooky choruses, and third album *The Detail Is In The Devil* is no different.

Capitalising on the hard graft put into debut *Animism* (2020) and follow up *Aces & Eights* (2021), and with new singer Russ Grimmett front and centre, the band power through 11 barnstorming tracks like their lives depend on it. Focusing largely on upbeat, good-time anthems, there's plenty to enjoy in banging opener *Time To Fly*, *Light The Fuse*, party-hardy manifesto *Tertulia Time* and *What's A Man Supposed To Do*. There's also space to slow down and get soulful on *Walk With You* and *Hawk Men Come*, while *Turn This Tide* finds SOL putting down the bottles of Jack Daniel's long enough to lament the sorry state of the planet.

High-impact rock'n'roll, plain and simple.

Essi Berelian

These Wicked Rivers

Force Of Nature FAT EARTH

These Wicked Rivers run deep.

Looking the part means nothing if you don't have the tunes. Fortunately, while Derby's These Wicked Rivers absolutely rock the preacher hats and grizzled beards thing, it's their songwriting chops that have turned them into real contenders.

Force Of Nature, the follow-up to 2020 debut *Eden*, is an ambitious, achingly classic rock-inflected showcase of great songs, all of them well-crafted and designed for maximum effect live. For potent, riff-led tunes, look no further than the blazing title track, *The Family*,

PRESS

Black Gold and *Testify*, but the band's real strength lies in the mellow and soulful, with vocalist John Hartwell as world-weary, heart-on-sleeve troubadour. *When The War Is Won, Just To Be A Man* and *Don't Pray For Me* build expertly from quiet beginnings to intensely dynamic climaxes, while emotional closer *Lonely Road* finds Hartwell in solo acoustic soul-searching mode. *Force Of Nature* couldn't be more aptly titled.

Essi Berelian

Trifecta

The New Normal KSCOPE

Showmanship, light relief and not a little grandstanding from prog powerhouse trio.

The Steven Wilson alumni is strong, with all three players here having featured alongside one of rock's more po-faced singer-songwriters – although the straight-faced schtick is something for Wilson's videos and artwork more than anything else. That said, it's debatable whether Wilson would have let a song like the loopy *Stroboscopic Fennel* (with a Nick Beggs monologue that sounds like he might have made up the words on the spot) out of the studio.

That notion won't worry this trio, though. This giddy collection of instrumentals (Beggs's occasional utterance aside) is an intoxicating blend of George Duke-era Zappa and Spike Milligan-like oddities (Kajagoogoo get a mention, Beggs argues with himself over who can play the didgeridoo best), which at times might sound odd, but it's a sometimes-wonderful sum of its parts, occasionally sublime and wonderfully groovy too.

Philip Wilding

The Dandy Warhols

Rockmaker SUNSET BLVD

Oregon hipsters beef up the alt.rock.

The twelfth studio album from veteran Portland hipsters the Dandy Warhols is a lumbering hungover sex beast defined by fat, distorted bass textures, frontman Courtney Taylor-Taylor's deadpan vocals and three guest-star cameos: Frank Black provides a bit of falsetto life to *Danzig With Myself* (yep, they're still in love with terrible puns), Slash slathers some quite enjoyable refried Hendrix riffage over *I'd Like To Help You With Your Problem*, and Debbie Harry duets with Taylor-Taylor on the standout Lee-and-Nancy-esque *I Will Never Stop Loving You*.

There's nothing here to match the catchiness of their old bubblegum alt.rock hits, but the band's resolute commitment to dumb hedonism and robotic rock grooves, especially on the self-parodying (?) *Alcohol And Cocainemarijuananicotine*, is borderline endearing, while *Love Thyself* reminds us that Taylor-Taylor can still write pop hooks whenever he can be bothered.

Paul Whitelaw

Kid Kapichi

There Goes The Neighbourhood SPINEFARM

Rising Hastings stars offer a sarcastic salute to fool Britannia.

With shades of the Happy Mondays' sloppy swagger, The Streets' poetic sarcasm, and jutting post-punk riffs that draw a through-line from Reverend And The Makers to IDLES, Kid Kapchi's third record is as much a monument to decades of distinctly British music as it is a withering portrait of life in the post-Brexit landscape, Brexpop at its finest.

Be it the blaring riffs of *Artillery*, the landfill-indie jangle of *Can EU Hear Me*, *Subaru*'s funk or ska-lite Suggs feature *Zombie Nation*, Kapichi never get lost in the swirl of influences, lacing each track with infectious hooks and a sense of irreverence. It's a wonderfully insidious cocktail that could fill dancefloors with the figures it lampoons. With ear worms aplenty and no cow too sacred to skewer, be it police brutality (999) or mindless nostalgia (the brilliantly 90s-overload of *Tamagotchi*), Kapichi are reaffirming themselves as one of Britain's most cuttingly incisive and essential acts.

Rich Hobson

Exhorder

Defectum Omnium NUCLEAR BLAST

American groove-metal veterans' late-career purple patch continues.

New Orleans ragers Exhorder laid out the formular for tighter-than-a-duck's quacker thrash metal on their first two cult classics: 1990's *Slaughter In The Vatican*, and *The Law* two years later. They fell apart shortly afterwards, just as Pantera were spinning the sounds they had helped create into gold.

While the surviving members of Pantera embark on a high-profile cash-grab reunion tour, Exhorder continue their own, more admirable, second act. This fourth album is as sharp a record as can be expected from a bunch of men in their mid-50s. *Under The Gaslight* and *Taken By Flames* crunch like the last 30-something years never happened, shamelessly calling back to a time when metal felt venomous and vibrant, while the seven-minute title track is a slab of sludgy Louisiana noir propelled by a riff that could slice diamonds. Youth may be behind them, but the malicious intent doesn't fade.

Dave Everley

Stoned Statues

Guardian SAKARA

Finnish newcomers take tentative steps towards stardom.

Set somewhere between stoner, punk and alternative metal, Finnish newcomers Stoned Statues continue to forge an idiosyncratic path with their second album, *Guardian*. Where the band's self-titled debut tapped into the funk-party spirit of the wider Scandinavian stoner scene, *Guardian* gives Stoned Statues more space to tinker with their sonic DNA, conjuring whispers of occult rock on *Take Me With You*, frantic punk on *Too Late* and towering prog on *Oblivious*.

It's a diverse mix, but vocalist Jenna Kosunen ensures the band don't wander too far into the stylistic weeds, her powerful voice tying it all together and lending an air of star quality that makes tracks like *Be My Guest* and the aforementioned *Too Late* feel like steps towards something truly massive.

Rich Hobson

ROUND-UP: MELODIC ROCK

By Dave Ling

Cruzh: never sounded any better than this.

PRESS

Cruzh

The Jungle Revolution FRONTIERS

With half a decade and a change of vocalist separating their self-titled debut from 2016 and follow-up *Tropical Thunder*, Swedish rockers Cruzh have walked something of a gradual, inconsistent path. That debut was a respectable yet overly familiar-sounding clarion call, but the appointment of Alex Waghorn at the mic for *Tropical Thunder* enabled Cruzh to take substantial strides forward.

Three years on, the improvements continue. *The Jungle Revolution* is a big, colourful statement, with lashings of shred guitar, seismic backing harmonies and tasteful keyboard embellishments. One thing for sure is that Cruzh have never sounded any better than this. The insistent title track provides a rebellious invitation to kick-start the party, *Skullcrusher* is a huge fist-pumper, while the endearingly cliché-loaded *FL89* is required listening for those still mourning the mighty Danger Danger.

Cruzh are not the finished article just yet, although they're definitely headed in the right direction.

Circle Of Friends

Cherokee Moon ESCAPE MUSIC

Essentially a collection of leftovers from 2021's melodic all-star gathering *The Garden*, *Cherokee Moon* once again teams a plethora of well-regarded players with different singers on each of its 11 tracks. Many of the original participants return, and the content is equally covers-heavy, including *Girl From Lebanon* by Europe, *Can't Let You Go* by Rainbow and Ten's epic *The Robe*.

Oz Hawe Petersson's Rendezvous

Oz Hawe Petersson's Rendezvous PRIDE & JOY MUSIC

A decade after they were together in the short-live Eye, guitarist Petersson and keyboard player Mathias Rosén reunite in Rendezvous with a set of stirring AOR tunes rendered all the more enjoyable by the presence of Boulevard singer David Forbes and UK vocalist Jane Gould on two tracks each.

About Us

Take A Piece FRONTIERS

Album number two from this promising six-piece band from Nagaland, India, who are blessed with bags of technical ability, and a soaring singer in Sochan Kikon. However, AOR groups are expected to stick to a pretty strict blueprint, so About Us's sporadic diversions into heavy metal – and also Kikon's growling – could alienate melodic-rock purists.

Arkado

Open Sea PRIDE & JOY MUSIC

Four years after debut album *Never Say Never* whetted more than a few appetites, these Swedes return with a follow-up that adds a slightly more symphonic and heavier edge to what was already an extremely accomplished sound. Unlike so many albums that start well but gradually peter out, *Open Sea* is crammed with consistently strong Scandi ear worms.

Liam Gallagher John Squire

Liam Gallagher John Squire WARNER

First fruits of the two-man collaboration, and hugely enjoyable.

Collaborations don't always work. When you have too many big names in a group, sometimes the result is more like standing on the toes of giants than standing on their shoulders: the combination of two or more rock legends often tends to dilute the result, not enhance it. In this case, however, it all seems to have turned out all right. Maybe it's because Liam Gallagher (vocals) is a fan of John Squire (guitar) and so is on his best behaviour. Maybe it's because John Squire has got someone he can work off – after all, it's the first time he's worked with a singer. Whatever it is, the combination of Gallagher's untrammeled vocal blasts – he sings on this record like if John Lennon was a cannon – and Squire's enormous slabs of riffs works perfectly. It's very stompy, which is a good thing, and sounds throughout like the final days of late psychedelia as it turned into 1968-era heavy rock: very heavy, and far from humble. True, there's the usual Lego aspect of all post-modern guitar music: if you think you've heard this song before, you have. *Mars To Liverpool* stomps along like a dazed Godzilla on a riff that's often similar to Lou Reed's version of *Rock'n'Roll*, while *Just Another Rainbow* sounds like every Liam vocal thrown into a blender with large parts of The Beatles' *Rain*. Meanwhile, *I'm A Wheel* introduces us to the third coming as it asks the unwanted question: 'What if Iggy Pop's *Nightclubbing* turned into a long and turgid blues number?'

All of which makes this album sound a little derivative, which at times it is. But it's full of twists and turns that are Squire's own, where he seems unable to decide which riff to play so plays all the ones he knows at once instead. Meanwhile, Gallagher is infused with the pure enjoyment of making music for fun and sings his enormous heart out. And with songs like *Make It Up As You Along* (*'Thank you for your thoughts and prayers and fuck you too'*) and the self-explanatory *I'm So Bored*, there's a freshness in both words and attitude that's more than welcome in a world of heritage and excessive respect.

Until the long-awaited collaboration between Noel Gallagher and Ian Brown emerges, feast your ears on this hugely enjoyable album.

■■■■■■■■□□

David Quantick

Sami Yaffa

Satan's Helpers War Lazer Eyes And The Money Pig Circus

LIVEWIRE/CARGO

Finn-glam semi-legend brings home the money pig bacon.

Fetching up with quite the sleaze/glam/rock'n'roll pedigree (Hanoi Rocks, New York Dolls, Michael Monroe, Johnny Thunders, Joan Jett, need I go on?), bassist/vocalist Sami Yaffa has been threatening to cough up a career-defining, wholly characteristic classic for some years now, a solo project where all the pieces just seem to fit. *The Innermost Journey To Your Outermost Mind* (2021) was almost there, the core elements acquired across 44 years in the game were all present and correct, but (deep breath) *Satan's Helpers War Lazer Eyes And The Money Pig Circus* sounds an awful lot like the very record we've all been waiting for.

Aided and abetted by an ace core band, and guests that include Monroe, Nasty Suicide, Dregen, Steve Conte and Rich Jones, Yaffa's made an assured multi-faceted, vintage Iggy-recalling record that rocks you raw when it needs to (*Hurricane Hank, Shitshow*) and gives good ballad for *Two Steps*-styled balance. And Sami? Sami's singing up a storm.

When this comes to fruition live, prepare for glorious mosh-pit carnage.

■■■■■■■■□□

Ian Fortnam

Ferris & Sylvester

Otherness *ARCHTOP*

London folk-rock duo bring the beauty on album two.

Issy Ferris and Archie Sylvester have made quite a name for themselves following their 2022 debut *Superhuman*, which bagged them Album Of The Year at the 2023 UK Americana Awards. This follow-up is no let-down after the hype. A soulful, emotional, deeply classy collection, it's given an analogue timelessness by having been recorded directly to tape using 1960s equipment.

The married duo complement each other in song as well as in life, their voices harmonising gorgeously over delicately dramatic, enchanting, fuzz-filled folk-rock songs beamed straight from the heart. The dreamy *Don't Fall In Love With Me* drips with romance, while country classic-in-the-making *Headache* paints a rather more warts-and-all portrait of long-term love. The idealistic *Mother*, meanwhile, is lushly orchestrated, with strings and sugar-sweet backing vocals reaching back through the decades to recreate the hazy vibe of mid-20th-century California.

Otherness is an oasis of beauty that will only strengthen Ferris & Sylvester's renown.

■■■■■■■■□□

Emma Johnston

Disastroid

Garden Creatures

HEAVY PSYCH SOUNDS

Bay Area stoners torch the template.

Don't be fooled by Disastroid's superficial identity as a stoner rock band. The San Francisco trio's fifth album certainly provides all the overdriven fuzz and giant, desert-dwelling riffs that the genre demands, but at heart this is a much stranger and more adventurous record than that.

With a hazy core of subversive mischief that runs through every track, *Garden Creatures* sits somewhere between the freewheeling density of classic Kyuss and the untamed art-sludge of prime Melvins, with shards of everything from scabrous noise rock to fidgety post-metal jammed into every available crevice. Even at their most conventional, on the loping doom of *Light 'Em Up*, they are avowedly odd. On fervently wonky riff pile-ups like *Stucco Nowhere*, *24* and *Jack Londonin'*, Disastroid teeter gleefully on the edge of madness. The freakish eyeballs that peer out from the artwork fit the mood perfectly: this is stoner rock gone wild, wayward and weird.

■■■■■■□□□□

Dom Lawson

Zach Person

Let's Get Loud *SELF-RELEASED*

The state of independence.

It's taken three years for guitarist Zach Person to follow up his self-titled debut album, but it's been worth the wait. Featuring *Muddy Water, Nothing To Lose* and *Wild*, the three singles released across 2022/23, *Let's Get Loud* (produced by guitarist Tyler Bryant, who also guests on *Feel*

It and the Zep-esque hoedown *Carolina*) showcases nine raggedly powerful modern blues and rock tunes that encompass Person's eclectic influences.

Person's muse is fired by grunge, soul, blues and heavy fuzz and distortion, and epics like *Make It*, with its cunning mid-song false climax and wailing solo, best exemplify his approach. Gorgeous pop melodies lurk beneath the swathes of overdriven riffs on stunning opener *Feel It* and soaring closer *Remnants*, while Person's long-time drummer and collaborator Jake Wyble brings extra swing and swagger to *Nothing To Lose* and *Gravity*.

Let's Get Loud is the singular sound of no compromise.

Essi Berelian

Crazy Lixx

Two Shots At Glory FRONTIER

Reimagined classics from Sweden's hair-bear bunch.

Malmo flash-metal lifers Crazy Lixx formed in the not-very-sexy year of 2002 with an impossible dream: to revive the looks, hooks and plastic pomp of 80s Sunset strippers like Crüe, Ratt and Faster Pussycat. Since then they've released eight albums of fist-pumping arena metal, with all the guitar heroism and lyrical odes to girls and lost weekends you'd expect from a band with two 'X's in their name.

Two Shots At Glory is a handy, all-inclusive compilation that spans the breadth of their career, but with a twist we're seeing a lot of these days. Classic party anthems like *Fire It Up, Lights Out!* and *Aint No Rest In Rock N Roll* have been revamped, reconsidered and re-recorded by the same line-up that brought us their last three full-length albums. Can you tell the difference? Well, the new versions all sound bigger, louder and ballsier. So mission accomplished.

Sleazegrinder

Bob Vylan

Humble As The Sun

GHOST THEATRE

The harder the times, the angrier the Vylan.

For anyone wishing Sleaford Mods had more tangible polemic behind all the effing and jeffing, here's Bob Vylan's fire-breathing fifth. '*I'm still here, they'll never take me alive!*' bawls singer Bobby Vylan, empowered by the Top 20 success of 2022's *The Price Of Life*. And by the time he's finished with you, you wouldn't want to be the elitist government, royalty, the constabulary, a landlord or the sort of coke-snorting, *Top Gear*-pining 'proper manly man' who considers the G-spot a conspiracy theory.

Crucially, the cost-of-living crisis has fuelled Vylan's ire to an incandescent degree. Over intense mash-ups of grime, punk-metal, dynamic grunge and drum'n'bass, *Hunger Games* imagines a game-show host whose star prize is a hot meal; the Cramps-esque *Dream Big* mocks Marxist idealism with the hard facts of modern poverty; *Get Yourself A Gun* even advocates tooling up against rising rents. Perhaps better to take it out via the voting booth this year, but Bob Vylan have become the loudest, most vital voice of righteous rage in a beaten-down nation.

Mark Beaumont

Riley's L.A. Guns

The Dark Horse GOLDEN ROBOT

Second album from the other version of the sleaze metal mainstays.

Like latter-day *Doctor Who* and the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the history of hard-rock scuzzballs L.A. Guns is a mess of tangled timelines, alternative incarnations and a general sense of acrimonious confusion. After leaving in 2016, longtime drummer Steve Riley launched his own version of the band to compete with the 'official' line-up featuring reunited singer Phil Lewis and guitarist Tracii Guns.

Riley's death in October 2023 at the age of 67 means that *The Dark Horse* is his swansong. It's a decent album, with a veneer of modernity bringing its old-school hard rock into the 2020s, even if *Rewind, Somebody Save Me* and cheeseball ballad *Sweet Summer Girl* lack the Sunset Strip sneer that defined the original L.A. Guns – singer Kurt Frohlich just doesn't have Lewis's spark and spite. It passes muster as an epitaph for Riley, even if it brings home the fact that the drummer and his estranged bandmates will never get a chance to patch up their differences.

Dave Everley

Sheryl Crow

Evolution BIG MACHINE

A change would do her good.

Despite insisting that 2019's duets album *Threads* would be her last, Crow returns with more "music from my soul", and she's on a winner to begin with as the opening brace of singles *Alarm Clock* and *Do It Again* play to her strengths: i.e. smooth, groovy, radio-friendly rock. *Love Life* also bops along nicely on a bed of 'na na na's.

After that it all becomes a bit by-numbers. Have a dig at AI in *Evolution* by all means, but write a better tune to go along with it; *Don't Walk Away* drags like it's got a boulder tied to its ankle; and the forced jollity of *Broken Record* is so wide of the goal it's out for a throw-in. Crow redeems herself somewhat with the useful chorus of the I-love-my-kids closer *Waiting In The Wings*, but only somewhat.

Some good singles, as always, but unfortunately a long way from career highlights *Sheryl Crow* and *The Globe Sessions*.

Pat Carty

Sum 41

Heaven :x: Hell RISE

Canadian punks' double-barrelled parting shot.

Sum 41 have never hidden their love of metal, book-ending the video for 2001 breakthrough hit *Fat Lip* with an appearance from their NWOBHM-style alter-egos Pain For Pleasure.

Announced in May 2023 as their final record, *Heaven :x: Hell* takes the influence way further, its double-album format allowing them to fill *Heaven* with 10 tracks of their trademark pop-punk, before going *Hell*-bent for leather with 10 metal tracks. *Heaven* is an adrenalin-charged barrage of intelligently crafted, hook-heavy material (*Waiting For A Twist Of Fate, Dopamine*), enlivened with hairpin tempo twists, and impressively free of punk clichés. As *Hell* surges into action with *Rise Up*'s thrusting fusion of shout-along punk chorus and metallic riffing, it's clear they're not playing their heavy side for laughs, using it instead to inject their characteristic sound with a well-suited darker aspect on *It's All Me* and *You Wanted War*.

Rich Davenport

BEST OF THE REST

Other new releases out this month.

Bodega

Our Brand Could Be Yr Life CHRYSALIS

Brooklyn's Bodega previously released a hugely ambitious lower-fi first draft of *OBCBYL* in '15. This lusher Mk II is a culturally conscious opus, equally dripping with classic 90s alt.US indie ambition (think Weezer, Neutral Milk Hotel). Well worth seeking out. A cracker. **8/10**

Shambolics

Dreams, Schemes & Young Teams SCRUFF OF THE NECK

Scotland's Shambolics spice swaggering Arctic Monkeys spikes with an Ash-alike ear for the commercial. As exuberant as prime-time Terrorvision, crossover/radio friendly. What's not to like? *That*'s what's not to like. Surely anything this likeable's got to be suspect. **7/10**

Marc Valentine

Basement Sparks WICKED COOL

Former Last Great Dreamers frontman Marc Valentine's second solo album is an engaging power-pop confection matching starburst glam dynamics with perky, eager-to-please choruses. Assured songwriting, popcore craftsmanship. We're clearly in safe hands here. **7/10**

The Chisel

What A Fucking Nightmare PURE NOISE

Stomping a fine line between vintage Oi and prime Ruts, The Chisel's watertight brand of pure aggression seems almost laser-guided when it comes to hitting the spot. While much hardcore's become anodyne and formulaic, this is proper, balls-out anger as an energy. **8/10**

Drunk Mums

Beer Baby LEGLESS

As long as terminally adolescent louts are bored and have access to leather jackets and no real idea what to do with their hair, the sound of '77 UK punk will endure. Even if it's from Australia and it's 2024. This, meanwhile, is great. Like educationally subnormal early Wire. **7/10**

Them Moose Rush

Zepaxia DOSTAVA ZVUKA/DIRTY OLD LABEL

Deliciously disconcerting Croatian prog deftly and rockily psychedelicised for the sort of punter who's not expecting a four-to-the-floor boogie any time soon. Tempos squonk and upper-register vocals insist while you wonder where you are and how you got there. Aces. **8/10**

Buzzard Buzzard Buzzard

Skinwalker COMMUNION

Welsh trio B3's lead oracle Tom Rees apparently reached a point where he lost his 'damn mind' during glam-psych-prog bouillabaisse *Skinwalker*'s birthing process. There's a song on here called *My Star Sign Is A Basset Hound*, which, ultimately, is all you need to know. **8/10**

Lair

Ngélar GUGURUGU BRAIN

Lair are a psych-soul/funk band from West Java who lace trad Panturan Tarling tropes through their slightly Bow Wow Wow-ish, eminently danceable grooves. Which they play on instruments made of terra cotta. We're not on the Sunset Strip now, Toto. **7/10**

Ancient Teeth

Humanizer DEBT OFFENSIVE

Combining grunge and shoegaze in a lushly vocaled woozy wash of sound they like to call 'dream noise', Canada's AT efficiently employ anthemic post-punk velocity (*Sacrifice*), but as *Humanizer* unfolds, a refreshingly light, more reflective side reveals itself to fine effect. **7/10**

Stephen EvEns

Here Come The Lights ONOMATAPOEIA

With knowing bedsit eccentricity set somewhere between Syd and Animals That Swim and lyrics that occasionally dip their toe into the discipline formerly known as poetry (JCC, Ivor Cutler), EvEns and chums have delivered a pangeneric minor masterpiece. **7/10**

Royal Tusk

Altrusitic MNRK

This punchy, confident third from the Alberta trio confirms them as an alt.rock force to be reckoned with. Post *Tusk II* breakthrough and a tough lockdown that saw vocalist Daniel Carriere stricken with severe long covid, it's nothing short of a career-affirming triumph. **8/10**

BEST OF THE REST REVIEWS BY IAN FORTNAM

SUBSCRIBE TO

CLASSIC ROCK

AND GET FREE

BOOMPODS HEADPODS PRO7

+

JUICE POWER BANK!

WORTH OVER £40!

Order online at

www.magazinesdirect.com/CRK/C99C

Choose your package...

PRINT AND DIGITAL + FREE GIFT

ONLY £51.99 EVERY 12 MONTHS BY DIRECT DEBIT

- NEW! Digital access to 80+ issues when you subscribe to print!*
- SAVE on shop price
- FREE DELIVERY direct to your door and device

SAVE 30%

DIGITAL MAGAZINE ONLY

ONLY £41.99 EVERY 12 MONTHS BY DIRECT DEBIT

- SAVE on shop price
- INSTANT ACCESS ANY TIME, anywhere, on iPad, iPhone and Android devices

SAVE 30%

Order online at

www.magazinesdirect.com/CRK/C99C

or call 0330 3331113 and quote code c99c

Lines are open Monday-Friday 8.30am to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 3pm (UK time)

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Offer closes April 26, 2024. Direct Debit offer is open to new UK subscribers only. This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue. The full subscription rate is for 12 months (13 issues) and includes postage and packaging. Your gift will be delivered separately within 60 days after your first payment has cleared. Gifts available only to subscribers on the UK mainland. Gifts not available with a digital subscription. Gifts are subject to availability and style/colour of the Juice Power bank may vary. *Access to the digital library will end with your subscription. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period, unless exceptional circumstances apply. For full terms and conditions visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries please call +44 (0) 330 333 1113 – lines are open Monday-Friday 8.30am-7pm, Saturday 10am-3pm UK time (excluding Bank Holidays) – or email help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.

DIDI ZILL/PRESS

Deep Purple

Machine Head: Super Deluxe Edition *UMC*

Three-CD reissue adds remixes, Montreux and BBC live sets, audio fairy dust and more.

Yup, the one with *Smoke On The Water*. That song, and this album, broke Deep Purple in America and made them legends all over the globe to this day.

This, essentially, is a three-CD version. The first disc pairs the Dweezil Zappa 2024 Remix with the 2024 Remaster; the second contains *In Concert '72*, the third delivers the previously unreleased *Montreux '71*. Given that you already own at least one copy of *Machine Head* and possibly bought *In Concert '72* on CD in 2012, you'll need to know that this £100 box also contains: a 60-page booklet, Dweezil's remix on vinyl in gatefold sleeve, and a Blu-ray audio disc containing a Dolby Atmos version, the 1974 quadrophonic mix, and some Dolby 5.1 surround versions.

In Concert '72 is a DJ-interrupted but otherwise superb BBC radio show recorded on the eve of *Machine Head*'s release, three months after the Rolling Stones Mobile trundled away from the Grand Hotel. Its value here is to underline how quickly Purple's studio work evolved once performed live – confirmed another five months on when half of *Machine Head* was immortalised on *Made In Japan*.

Montreux '71 was recorded at the lakeside resort's casino eight months before the Frank Zappa gig was ended by the fire that inspired *Smoke On The Water*. It's worth hearing for Jon Lord's keyboards alone, but out of synch, as the gig was taped before sessions for *Machine Head*'s predecessor, *Fireball*, were complete.

Ritchie Blackmore slams *Fireball* as the result of being "worked to death by the management", and credits the time afforded to the Swiss sessions with making *Machine Head* "my favourite LP with Purple".

So Dweezil, you had most of 2023… whadaya got? Delicious detail, mostly – using separation technology simply unimaginable to engineer/mixer Martin Birch in 1972. Over running times closer to the 2012 remasters than to Glover's slightly longer 1997 remix, the bass and Ian Paice's drums take another step forward. Guitar solos sound bigger, too – the one in non-album ballad *When A Blind Man Cries* now as stunning as Gillan's vocal… Superficial differences, probably, but collectively reinforcing Glover's insistence that Purple succeeded because of "a mix of the musicianship of Ritchie, Jon and Ian Paice, and the sort of naive, homemade, simple quality of the songwriting that Ian Gillan and I brought to the band". That mix was never stronger than on *Machine Head*, and never clearer than it is now.

Neil Jeffries

The Michael Schenker Group

Is It Loud Enough? Michael Schenker 1980 – 1983 *CHRYSALIS*

Mucho Schenker Gubbins.

When Michael Schenker left UFO (for the first time) in 1978, midway through the tour that would deliver the band's legendary *Strangers In The Night* double-live fandango, he had a point to prove. After a brief reunion with Scorpions, the guitarist released *The Michael Schenker Group*, which was much superior to UFO's post-*Strangers* studio album *No Place To Run*. First blut to Herr Schenker.

This six-CD box set brings together the aforementioned 1980 debut along with the albums *MSG, Assault Attack* and *Built To Destroy*, and adds discs of demos, alternative versions and unreleased material. Naturally, Metal Mickey's sublime soloing and supreme riffage shine through. But unlike with many flash fretboardists, the songs are the key to the schloss. Whether it's Gary Barden or Graham Bonnet on vocals, Cozy Powell or Ted McKenna on drums, Schenker leads the charge – but never in the manner of a Blackmore control freak. Having said that, the accompanying 52-page booklet paints a chaotic picture of Michael's solo career being built on a mix of steely determination and total bewilderment. Still, if it works…

Away from stormers such as *Armed And Ready, Cry For The Nations* and *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie*, there's a surprising amount of humour – who can resist *Attack Of The Mad Axeman*, Schenker's riposte to critics who thought him a wiener short of a schnitzel.

Oh, and to answer the question posed by the title (and with abject apologies to Mr Bonnet), it depends on how deftly you apply your knob.

Geoff Barton

Various

Tim's Listening Party *DEMON*

Genre-blind Charlie-in-chief turns covid curator.

In March 2020, during the first covid lockdown, Charlatans frontman Tim Burgess hit on the idea of hosting Twitter listening parties – a fun distraction in which members of the public spun albums while engaging with the musicians who made them.

Four years on, they're still going strong, and here's a four-CD compilation (an edited double vinyl version is also available) to prove it. Cherry-picked from more than 1,000 listening parties, it opens with John Lennon's appropriately lockdown-friendly *Hold On*, before veering off into a fairly eclectic sprawl of alt.rock, indie-pop, ska, disco, hip-hop, Afro-funk, synth-pop and soul. This results in some amusing juxtapositions, the banging post-rock anguish of Joy Division's *Isolation* followed by Level 42's slick 80s smasheroo *Running In The Family* being a particular highlight. That aforementioned Lennon track aside, the playlist doesn't stretch back further than the late 70s, but you can't complain when the artists from that era include The Specials and Talking Heads.

You've also got to admire the mild perversity of a compilation in which Belle And Sebastian rub shoulders with Iron Maiden and comedian John Shuttleworth's jaunty Bontempi ode to his Austin Ambassador Y-reg.

Paul Whitelaw

Lillian Axe

The Box – Volume Two, The Quickening *GLOBAL ROCK*

Unnecessary box set covering C-list hard rockers' late career.

Lillian Axe were always better than that godawful name suggested; the New Orleans band's self-titled 1988 debut album and the following year's *Love + War* were minor hard rock classics.

This box set focuses on more recent times, but at six CDs it's more overkill than value for money: 2010's impressive studio album *Deep Red Shadows* is a keeper, but 2012's malnourished *XI The Days Before Tomorrow* is the work of a band bereft of inspiration and budget (both come with half a dozen bonus tracks of variable, mostly underwhelming quality).

It's completed by a previously released 1999 disc of demos (decent), a double live acoustic album (padding) and a shoddy-sounding 1992 live radio broadcast (ropey), while a lack of sleeve-notes or even credits to tell you which line-ups appear

on which albums adds to the overwhelming sense of 'Will this do?' Still, Lillian Axe completists will doubtless be overjoyed. Both of them.

Dave Everley

Eagles

To The Limit: The Essential Collection RHINO

Multi-format compilation of country-rock behemoths' greatest hits and live shows.

Fleetwood Mac might be more fashionable and Steely Dan more revered, but the Eagles were undoubtedly the most commercially successful of 70s rock's West Coast giants – *Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975* overtook Michael Jackson's *Thriller* in 2018 as the biggest-selling album of all time.

This carefully curated 51-song set is designed to seal their legacy, combining their biggest hits (*Hotel California, One Of These Nights*) and fan favourites (*Victim Of Love*) with 16 live tracks spanning their career.

If electrifying live versions of *Already Gone* (from 1976) and *Life In The Fast Lane* (1980) serve as reminders of their unique ability to combine sugar-spun harmonies and technical prowess with the band's self-proclaimed 'song power', later renditions, including a version of *The Long Run* from 2018, are testimony to that other vital necessity for survival – staying power. "Who still likes country rock after thirty years?" Don Henley asks rhetorically to massed cheers during a 1999 version of *Peaceful Easy Feeling*. A quarter of a century later, as their touring juggernaut approaches the UK for a final victory lap, it's safe to say the whole world does.

Paul Moody

Nektar

Recycled: 5CD Remastered & Expanded Edition

CHERRY RED/ESOTERIC

Underrated prog ecology trip, recultivated.

Nektar's second-best album here gets the mega-box treatment recently given to their best, *Remember The Future*. The Hamburg-formed British proggers had misfired with the release between the two, 1974's *Down To Earth*, so they wisely came over all cosmic again, delivering a concept near-classic about a dystopian planet where alien tourists destroy the environment, or suchlike. If nothing else, and when they hit their groove they were really something else, Nektar were gurus of going green.

This 1975 crackerjack stands up well, its two absorbing suites evolving through rock, pop, funk and a choir (why not?), with minimal noodling and even – get this – catchy tunes. The clichéd criticism of prog is that it waffles on, but this switches dramatic scenes busily and vibrantly. Larry Fast (who later worked with Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush) makes canny synth choices, especially on *Cybernetic Consumption*, which pre-empts prime Giorgio Moroder, and the whole thing builds to a climax with aplomb. *Marvellous Moses* takes in yacht rock, fat bass lines, a phase that evokes Tangerine Dream on benzedrine, and a lovely resolution that would have had sceptics swooning if they'd give it a chance.

Your shiny new five-CD set offers Geoff Emerick's original Chateau D'Herouville mix, before the band decamped to Air Studios to garnish it, a new remaster, and three discs of 1975-76 live shows from Toronto and Long Island. These focus on recreating *Recycled*, but also graft through passages from *Remember The Future* and *A Tab In The Ocean*. Reclaim this from relative obscurity.

Chris Roberts

Van Der Graaf Generator

Still Life / Vital ESOTERIC.

Delirious contortions, delicious confections. Devious melodies.

Van der Graaf Generator – led by the multi-faceted, often perturbing Peter Hammill, 'the Hendrix of the Voice' – always were much darker, way more focused yet simultaneously more free-flowing than their progressive-rock contemporaries. There again, Hammill never viewed VdGG as prog.

In places, 1976's *Still Life* (**8/10**) shivers with malice. David Jackson's turbulent saxophones provide little to no relief to Hammill's grandiose literary visions and incredible range of vocals on *La Rossa*. The following *My Room (Waiting For Wonderland)*, with its playful (ish) call-and-response warbling, is eight minutes of cossetted sweet relief. It was VdGG's second after their re-formation in '75, and remains a main highlight.

In comparison, the live double album *Vital* (**9/10**) is full-on emergent punk/prog, influencing the more out-there outer reaches of both. The 14-minute medley that closes disc one sounds like a direct forefather of King Gizzard's more focused ravings. In places this is akin to Hawkwind in their acid derangement, or perhaps the unrelenting miasma of prime King Crismon. Hammill is in hyper-fierce mood as he pummels his way across *Ship Of Fools* and *Mirror Images*, instruments and percussion wailing in his wake. Rarely does rock sound this impassioned, this brutal, this scarily powerful, as it does on *Door*, Hammill not holding back his voice one iota.

Both albums have been remastered from the original tapes, and have fully restored artwork. The former is available on vinyl, the latter on double CD and LP.

Everett True

Bon Jovi

Bon Jovi: Deluxe Edition

MERCURY/UME

(Not so) fab at 40.

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY

In 1984, *Kerrang!* critics voted Bon Jovi's debut the eleventh-best album of that year, a few notches below The Rejects' – né the Cockney Rejects – *Quiet Storm* at No.8. Surprising? Nope. There was only ever going to be one winner in a Jon Bon Jovi-versus-Stinky Turner ready-to-ruck rumpus. (Van Halen's *1984* was the No.1.)

Today, one wonders how Bon Jovi's flaccid fledgling offering got anywhere near the UK Top 10. Its flat-packed melodic-rock meanderings make the likes of Journey, Survivor and Toto sound as superhuman as Galactus on a planet-gobbling bonanza.

Remember those post-NWOBHM bands such as Shy and Tobruk, and their cack-handed attempts to emulate the AOR mastery of their American peers? Weirdly, that's where *Bon Jovi* (the album) comes from. JBJ himself has admitted that Bon Jovi (the band) didn't gel until their third full-length, *Slippery When Wet*, so maybe the 40th anniversary of their first LP should have been swept under the bath mat.

Matters admittedly begin promisingly with the sleek, statuesque *Runaway*. But beneath the glossiness lurks a tale of enforced prostitution: *'Ooh she's a little runaway/ Daddy's girl learned fast, now she works the night away.' She Don't Know Me* and *Roulette* possess a twee charm and are elevated by some terrific (if somewhat stifled) Steve Stevens-style guitaring from Richie Sambora, abetted by guest Aldo Nova. As for Jon, he gets 10/10 for effort, despite sounding like a hairsprayed David Cassidy. After a halfway decent start the album goes downhill rapidly, banal song titles – *Breakout/Burning For Love/Come Back/Get Ready* – telling you all you need to know.

We must, natch, mention the bonus tracks included, which include *Runaway* (cassette demo), *Runaway* (pre-production demo), *Runaway* (alternative version), *Runaway* (extended version – 2024 mix) and *Runaway* (Tokyo live '85 – Obie O'Brien mix). We get that the idea is to highlight the development of a song over time, but this is preposterous. After all, we're talking about a pootling pixie-boot anthem here (i.e. *Runaway*, please pay attention). It's not exactly *A Plague Of Lighthouse Keepers*.

Note that the limited-edition ruby-coloured vinyl and cassette versions simply comprise the original album. No extra music, just a few packaging tweaks and a smidgeon of remastering. Sighs of relief all round.

Geoff Barton

Manic Street Preachers

Lifeblood (20th Anniversary Edition) SONY

The Manics' least popular album makes a worthy return.

Manic Street Preachers were at a crossroads after tearing down the chart-hogging *This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours* with a partial return to their rebellious gnarly roots in 2001's *Know Your Enemy*. Rather than continuing to "destroy everything we'd built" for their next record, 2004's *Lifeblood*, the Blackwood trio opted to make a fully blown pop album instead.

Inspired by the electro era of 80s New Order and Simple Minds, the Manics toned down the guitars and significantly polished their sound to a glacial sheen that was a million miles away from *The Holy Bible*'s dark heart. Commercially the record was something of a disaster by their standards, peaking at No.13 in the UK before tumbling out of the album chart within three weeks of its initial release.

But it was by no means the worst album they made. Politically the Manics still had plenty to say, even if their positive spin on a disgraced US president (*The Love Of Richard Nixon*) raised a few confused eyebrows. And it wasn't short of a tune or two – *Empty Souls* and the excellent *1985* were right up there with some of their finest pop anthems. Whether the trio were overshadowed by the sudden explosion of guitar bands in 2004, or the fact that they'd been beaten to the finish line by The Killers on the electro-pop front, remains a mystery. Either way, their egos had been battered badly, to the point that Nicky Wire thought: "Fucking hell, that's it." But of course it wasn't curtains for the Manics, and they would go on to recapture their anthemic bombast on the next album (*Send Away The Tigers*).

Unlike 2022's *Know Your Enemy* reissue, which saw the record released as the band originally intended, this 20th-anniversary edition of *Lifeblood* redresses the balance by expanding it with a raft of B-sides, demos, remixes and a selection of live tracks. The glistening *All Alone Here* and the introspective *Litany* are welcome additions, as is Steven Wilson's beat-heavy, reverb-drenched remix of *1985*. And (Bowie producer) Tony Visconti's original mixes of the three tracks that made it onto the final record – *Solitude Sometimes Is, Emily* and *Cardiff Afterlife* – are also intriguing to hear in their earliest form.

As expanded reissues go, there's plenty on this one to savour and ultimately elevate a record that, 20 years on, still has a worthy place in the Manic Street Preachers eclectic history.

Damian Jones

Allman Brothers Band

Bear's Sonic Journals: Fillmore East February 1970 OWSLEY STANLEY FOUNDATION

Southern comfort.

These earliest commercially available live recordings of the Allman Brothers Band (originally released in 1996) resurface now as a limited-edition double album pressed on "orange sunshine" vinyl. The title (as does the packaging) reflects the original tapes' origins, recorded and mixed by the Grateful Dead's legendary sound man Owsley 'Bear' Stanley at shows on February 11, 13 and 14, 1970 when the Allmans opened a triple bill topped by Love and the Dead.

The seven-song set catches the Allmans on the brink of stardom, after their debut album and just 11 months as a band, not that you can tell. It opens with *In Memory Of Elizabeth Reed*, written by Dickey Betts a few weeks before, then two covers – *Hoochie Coochie Man* and *Statesboro Blues* – which they would record for second album *Idlewild South* soon after these performances (although the latter wasn't included). Between first-album songs *Trouble No More* (Muddy Waters) and Gregg Allman's *Whipping Post* they rework the blues standard *Outskirts Of Town*, then slip into a 30-minute version of *Mountain Jam* (split across two sides of the second disc) sounding almost as slick as on their legendary *At Fillmore East/Eat A Peach* performances taped at the same venue just over a year later.

Some things just don't get old.

Neil Jeffries

These Immortal Souls

Reissues MUTE

Australian post punks' '87 and '92 albums remastered.

Fronted by Roland S Howard, formerly of The Birthday Party and Crime & The City Solution, These Immortal Souls (initially London-based) also included Howard's brother Harry on bass, ex-Swell Mapper Epic Soundtracks on drums and Genevieve McGuckin on keyboards. Their debut, *Get Lost (Don't Lie)* (**8/10**), with its sense of moral squalor borne out of the reality of their precarious lives, decaying grandeur (as depicted in the defiant elegance of McGuckin's keyboards) feels today like a capsule of a vanished monochromatic era, of leather, heroin, sticky floors at venues, the Berlin Wall, with Howard's deathly yet impassioned vocals recalling something of Swans on the likes of *Marry Me (Lie! Lie!)* and *I Ate The Knife*.

I'm Never Gonna Die Again (**7/10**) was released in 1992. The cultural scenery had shifted significantly, the band rather less so. Fatally, they'd lost momentum – this would be their last album. Still, they hold up, with McGuckin's keyboards like chandeliers swinging from ceilings close to collapse, Howard's caustic guitars splashing like buckets of cold water to disinfect the vomit stains. Tracks like *The Money's All Gone* were laments, but they'd achieved a triumph of sorts.

David Stubbs

Garbage

Bleed Like Me (2024 Expanded Remastered Edition) BMG/STUNVOLUME

Got vinyl if you want it, or a two-CD edition if you prefer.

Even after almost 20 years, the feeling remains that if Garbage had upped their work rate and released records with a greater frequency, they might have kept up with the zeitgeist rather than chasing it.

Released four years after the flaccid *Beautiful Garbage*, 2005's *Bleed Like Me* was and remains a consolidation of their strengths while eventually succumbing to their weaknesses. Counting in its favour is a ramping up of guitars and attitude in preference to the electronics that beat at the heart of their self-titled debut and its follow-up *Version 2.0*. So while *Why Do You Love Me* – a UK Top 10, lest we forget – owes much to Elastica's *Stutter*, it still kicks arse with a hefty swing, as does the Dave Grohl-guesting *Bad Boyfriend* and the crunchy *Sex Is Not The Enemy*. Sadly the last third of the album becomes estranged from melody and ideas as it fills space like a self-inflating dinghy going off unexpectedly in a shed.

The second disc, comprised of cover versions (Ramones' *I Just Wanna Have Something To Do*),

MITCH IKEDA/PRESS

remixes (two versions of *Sex Is Not The Enemy*) and B-sides (*Honeybee*) go some way to showing why the single format eventually petered out.

Julian Marszalek

Curve

Unreadable Communication: Anxious Recordings (1991-1993)

CHERRY RED

On their day they were superlative.

Dark alt.rock and electronica, fused together with menacing and ricocheting beats that raged around the inside of your head for weeks, a whirlpool of sound that had its roots in the warped guitar rush of My Bloody Valentine and Cocteau Twins – with elements of fellow nascent shoegazers Lush and Cranes thrown in – but which remained uniquely, recognisably Curve.

Introduced by Dave Stewart of Eurythmics, the duo of Toni Halliday (vocals) and Dean Garcia (electronica) raged on the underground UK scene of the early 90s. Their disturbing, illuminating first two albums (1992's *Doppleganger* and 1993's *Cuckoo*) continue to hold considerable sway. (Garbage, for one, owe them a big debt.) This is music to lose yourself within: feral, lush, enticing. Highly sexually charged, too. Both albums are featured on this sumptuous four-CD set, alongside early killer singles and various live recordings.

A very welcome re-examination of a wrongly lost band.

Everett True

Emerson, Lake & Powell

Complete Collection

CHERRY RED

Welcome back my friends…

Six years after 1978's *Love Beach* appeared to have drawn a line under Emerson, Lake & Palmer's career, Keith Emerson and Greg Lake decided to revive the band, having noted the continuing success of their contemporaries Yes and Genesis. However, Carl Palmer was now coining it in Asia, so drummer Cozy Powell was brought in in his place. It helped, of course, that he had the same initials.

While Yes and Genesis had utilised the energy of the new wave to survive and prosper, Emerson and Lake carried on exactly as before. Indeed the format is more reminiscent of their early-70s albums, switching between pompous fanfares and mellow ballads. Powell's bombastic drumming style does serve to invigorate the other two, though, particularly on the bludgeoning version of *Mars, Bringer Of War* from Holst's *The Planets*, and the crazed, apocalyptic cover of *The Loco-Motion* that probably not even Vanilla Fudge would dare attempt.

The ballads are less engaging because they are running low on melodic ideas. The best of them, on *Touch And Go*, is nicked from Vaughan Williams, who previously lifted it from a traditional English folk song.

ELPowell's solitary album is boosted by a studio rehearsal for a live show (*The Sprocket Sessions*), and a concert from their (abbreviated) US tour.

Hugh Fielder

The Wedding Present

Watusi PROPER/UNIVERSAL

Grooves, drones and wistful weepies make Gedge's fourth an eclectic triumph.

Having done grunge-noir better than the Americans on 1991's phenomenal *Seamonsters*, and comprehensively conquered the charts with 1992's 12-hits-in-12-months Hit Parade project, David Gedge might understandably have felt that music was now his angst-fuelled oyster.

Cue *Watusi*, The Wedding Present's fourth (official) album, their Island Records debut and – inspired, perhaps, by the textural adventuring of The Hit Parade – a scintillating dive into rich eclecticism. The drone-pop *Click Click*, with its adorable a-capella coda, was Gedge's trademark romantic devotional at its most hypnotic, motorik and consuming. Go-go friendly moments such as *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* and *It's A Gas* hip-jiggled along with a very 60s grooviness. The heartbroken *Spangle*, reflecting the crumbling of the protagonist's heart, was rendered in the style of a crackling antique record.

Indeed, for all the lip-curled panache of *So Long, Baby* (given an oompah coda on the disc of extra tracks) and the ebullience of *Swimming Pools, Movie Stars*, *Watusi* was arguably Gedge's greatest ballad record. *Big Rat* and *Gazebo* count among his most affecting acoustic-led laments, and this 30th-anniversary reissue becomes particularly essential thanks to the raw studio out-takes and alternative versions including wonderfully noisy and impassioned full-band takes of *Gazebo* and *Spangle*. All in all, a goosebump-inducing gas.

Mark Beaumont

The Butthole Surfers

Reissues MATADOR

The early work of the Texan weirdos remastered.

Led by the impossibly tall and invariably naked Gibby Haynes, the Butthole Surfers were a maverick troupe of acid freaks, deadbeats and outcasts whose early work gleefully twisted punk and psychedelia into grotesque, distended shapes. On stage, terrifyingly, they were aided by graphic footage of sex-change operations, and worse.

Matador Records' Buttholes reissue programme kicks off with the band's debut full-length album *Psychic, Powerless, Another Man's Sac* (**8/10**), whose highlights include *Mexican Caravan*, an increasingly frazzled space rocker that tells of a search for heroin; the delightfully disgusting, phlegm-powered *Lady Sniff*; and the hallucinatory *Cowboy Bob*, an ever-spiralling, post-apocalyptic acid-fantasy in which Haynes jabbers in the manner of a someone who's undergone a partial lobotomy.

Follow-up *Rembrant Pussy Horse* (**8/10**) was more of the same, only more sinister, from the warped and woozy opener *Creep In The Cellar*, via the punch-drunk drone of *Hall Of Whirling Knives*, to a cover of The Guess Who's *American Woman* so demented it sounds like a fairground being dismantled.

The live mini-album *PCPPEP* (**7/10**) captures much of the band's on-stage intensity, and climaxes with a completely unglued version of *Something* (not the Beatles song) on which guitarist Paul Leary is dominant, somehow hauling maniacal riffs and psychotic solos from the maelstrom as it swirls.

Fraser Lewry

BEST OF THE REST

Other reissues out this month.

The Nuthins

1 Step Forward… Further Steps DETOUR

You'd be forgiven for mistaking bowl-cut 'n' Chelsea-booted 90s Salisbury garage quartet The Nuthins for an actual pep-pilled, hep-cat combo straight out of mid-60s Nuggetsville USA. This 33-track rave-up's attention to detail and unbridled mania is irresistible. **8/10**

Peter And The Test Tube Babies

The Complete Singles CAPTAIN OI!

Punk Pathetique. What was that all about? Sussex louts P&TTTB effectively defined this tirelessly self-sabotaging genre with their indie-chart-bothering run of almost humorous 'hits'. And they're all here (including 1982's *Banned From The Pubs*) on two CDs. **6/10**

Virgin Prunes

A New Form Of Beauty BMG

Irish post-punks the Virgin Prunes featured Gavin Friday (before he was Gavin Friday) and Dik Evans (before he was U2 Edge's brother). Imagine a glam Birthday Party or a funkless Pop Group. Now imagine buying two CDs of their edgiest, wilful rackets. No? Me neither. **4/10**

Xmal Deutschland

Early Singles 1981-1982 Sacred Bones

Hamburg goths Xmal Deutschland's earliest vinyl efforts are wearingly amateurish in their execution. No one seems to be having much fun or looking terribly hard for a tune. *Incubus Succubus* is alleged to be some sort of genre classic but, bloody hell… Great hair, though. **4/10**

Chris Spedding

Songs Without Words ESOTERIC

Post-Jack Bruce-associated emergence, the ace guitarist, whose future could be best defined as the point at which the Sex Pistol/Womble Venn diagram intersects, made a *Motorbikin'*-free, trombone-infused prog-jazz album he doesn't like to talk about. Nice… **6/10**

Various

Moving Away From The Pulsebeat CHERRY RED

An unreliable cove, yer 'post-punk'. A broad indiscriminate church of a non-genre that can either mean 'punk mk.II' (PiL) 'music indebted to punk' (Killing Joke) or 'music too poor to be described as anything else' (O Level). Here's five CDs of all three. Best get the beers in. **7/10**

Alice Cooper

Theatre Of Death EARMUSIC

It was a decidedly 80s metal-inclined Coop (with Pretty Boy Floyd's Keri Kelli on lead) that graced Hammersmith Apollo in '09. Plenty of *Nightmare*, even *From The Inside* and *Brutal Planet* bits, though sadly no *Eyes Of*, but all the usual set-pieces. A 33-track vinyl virgin. **7/10**

Del Amitri

Twisted UMR/PROPER

Is there any band more ripe for reappraisal than reliably first-rate Scots Del Amitri, whose accessible pop/rock light was persistently hidden (throughout their 90s heyday) by grunge and Britpop bushels? This '95 Faces-lite fourth rocks with conviction, flair and panache. **7/10**

Nico

Reissues DOMINO

Back on LP/CD, ex-Velvets chanteuse Nico's *The Marble Index* ('68, avant-garde, quasi-classical, a contralto cri de coeur) and *Desertshore* ('70, featuring the harmonium-driven *Janitor Of Lunacy*). Gothic? They make Joy Division's *Closer* sound like a square dance. Both **7/10**

Various

Leather Jackets And Diesel Smoke, Chili Dippin' In Red Tiger Shoes RIGHTEOUS

The ongoing series of ace two-CD sets inspired by Lux and Ivy continues with 50 songs about cars. And *Monkeys In Space*. Rockabilly savants collide with maniacal exoticists, and the entire sax-crazed Go Cat Go shebang is frankly unhinged. **7/10**

The Cryin' Shames

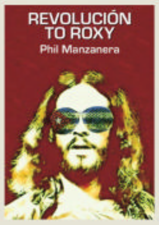
Please Stay CHERRY RED

Cherry Red's ongoing delve through Joe Meek's tea chests can't always strike gold. Here, in '66, he's trying to recreate Motown with a so-so Liverpool beat group and failing badly. Anodyne, archaic, outmoded: post-*Rubber Soul*, Joe's game was truly up. **3/10**

BEST OF THE REST REVIEWS BY IAN FORTNAM

Revolución To Roxy

Phil Manzanera *EXPRESSION*



From peripatetic youth to art-rock maestro: memoirs of a Mr. Nice Guy.

"I hope you'll find my family's history as interesting as my fifty-year career in music", Phil Manzanera offers in the preface to his lockdown-written memoir, adding realistically: "Of course, it's no problem if you want to skip to Roxy…" Probably, most of us will. By and large, we read rock-star autobiographies for revelations, ideally involving extravagance, excess and secrets spilled.

That was never going to happen here. Roxy Music were not Mötley Crüe, and Manzanera is acknowledged as one of the most decent, modest people in the game. It's a testament, then, to what a stellar professional life he's had that the book builds at a canter into a gently illuminating read, without burning bridges or defenestrating televisions. And yes, his family had some unusual experiences, with the young Phil growing up in Hawaii, Venezuela, Cuba and Colombia. He started playing guitar aged six.

Back in England, aged 21, he joins Roxy, earning £15 a week, and ditches his double denim. They want to be the British Velvets, but their art-school quirks render them unique. All goes well until Ferry and Eno diverge – "Their two personalities were the reverse of each other," Manzanera writes. More surprisingly, he elaborates: "Eno was very gregarious and Ferry was very secretive." Across the splits and reunions, he signals that Ferry hogging the steering wheel was his chief issue. A 1982 kiss-off of "It's been a great pressure working with you" is as bitchy as Phil gets. That said, the last tour was a gratifying, mellowed-by-age experience for all parties.

So this book is more about serenity than scandal. Manzanera's achievements outside Roxy, from his solo records and production work to collaborations with David Gilmour, Robert Wyatt, Godley & Creme and others are covered, although it's odd how swiftly he skims over his work with John Cale and Nico. There's a fun story about Eric Stewart phoning a Barbados studio to persuade Phil to ask Eddy Grant if he could ask his friend the prime minister to let Paul McCartney off a dope bust (he does). And you'll believe how absurdly competitive Roger Waters was at tennis and swimming. A wry comment about the Floyd "debacle" being escalated by people "saying things they probably later regretted" confirms why this book is charming rather than outrageous, and – more than this – why you'd be hard-pressed to find anybody not kindly disposed towards one of rock's most subtly influential figures.

Chris Roberts

The Life And Times Of Little Richard

Charles White *OMNIBUS*

A-wop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-lop-bam-book.

That Little Richard was the most electrifying of all rock's pioneers is beyond dispute. That he was the first out of the blocks; "the originator, the emancipator and the architect of rock'n'roll" is also inarguable. This I know because it was Richard himself who told me so, in no uncertain terms, and there was most certainly no arguing with him. And while we're in the arena of the indisputable, there's simply no better biography of the man than Charles White's authorised *Life And Times*.

Originally published in '84, and with significant input from its subject, it's positively packed with engaging, compelling and occasionally startling revelations. There's one particular anecdote concerning the late Buddy Holly that, even four decades after its original telling, will leave the average punter's jaw lolling for some significant time. There are abundant vox pops – McCartney, Jagger, Richard's family and associates – and it's a pacy yarn with chunky appendices (sessions, discography). But this new edition (with its new material copyright) fails entirely to mention that Richard died in 2020. It needs a new preface. Desperately. The original is woefully out of date, and not just factually; describing Richard's bisexuality as 'freakish' only seems woefully archaic. That said, it's still an essential classic of the rock biographer's art.

Ian Fortnam

Zerox Machine: Punk, Post-Punk And Fanzines In Britain 1976-88

Matthew Worley *REAKTION BOOKS*

Definitive document of pre-internet, peer-to-peer communication about music.

This meticulously researched, 360-page book takes the reader back to those heady days before media influencers and gifted content, when the punk explosion of 1976 sparked a photocopy frenzy among those determined to take action themselves, even if it just meant grabbing a staple gun.

Author Worley's account is anything but a cut-and-paste job, as he explores zine-scenes catering for obscurist tastes in post-punk, ska, goth, indie and beyond with academic rigour. Peppered with monochrome images of long-lost mags including *Hard As Nails* and *Stand Up And Spit*, it's delivered with an unrelenting zeal.

As passionate and as packed with energy as its subject matter.

Paul Moody

The Zombies: On Track

Emma Stott *SONICBOND*

A lovable labour of love.

The considerable highs, the forgettable lows, the Colin Blunstone/Rod Argent re-formation and rekindled critical acclaim of the 2000s… Crazily, The Zombies' stellar reputation is built on just two 60s studio albums and one classic hit single, *She's Not There*, their debut. Their second LP, the wickedly baroque *Odessey And Oracle*, has become one of the most acclaimed albums of the 1960; at least 20 Zombies compilations have been issued to capitalise on the band's enduring charm.

On Track is a book written by a fan for other fans, and what it lacks in guile and presentation smarts it more than makes up for with enthusiasm and attention to detail. 'Every album, every song,' boasts the cover, and that is precisely what the reader gets. Did you know that *She's Not There* was banned from America's airwaves in the wake of 9/11? Me neither.

Everett True

Weighted Down: The Complicated Life Of Skip Spence

Cam Cobb *OMNIBUS PRESS*

Alone again Oar.

The LSD-fuelled career of Skip Spence, which had started so brightly, began to slip in 1968 when he went looking for his Moby Grape bandmates with an axe, and chopped down their hotel room door (fortunately they were out). He was still brandishing the axe when he showed up at the studio. The producer called the cops.

Five months later, after his release from a psychiatric hospital, carrying "pads and

PRESS

pads" of lyrics, he headed to Nashville, where he recorded a solo album, *Oar*, on which he played everything. The (alleged) 700 people who bought it found it captivating. Spence spent the next 30 years slipping in and out of reality by day and facing down his demons at night.

In *Weighted Down*, author Cam Cobb has separated the facts from the myths and added some quirks of his own, such as the local temperature at many significant events. He has also added warmth by involving Spence's children.

Hugh Fielder

1972: When Progressive Rock Ruled The World

Kevin Furbank SONICBOND

Prog's 'finest hour' digested.

In 1972, the best-selling single in Britain was *Amazing Grace* by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, closely pursued by Lieutenant Pigeon's *Mouldy Old Dough*. Presumably this isn't the reason why Kevin Furbank, author of Sonicbond's latest album-by-album overview, claims that progressive rock reigned supreme that year. The writer's case rests on Jethro Tull, Emerson Lake & Palmer, Pink Floyd and Focus, all of whom made the album Top 10. Some will argue that peak Tull had arrived with 1971's *Aqualung*, while Yes and Genesis didn't record full-blown concept albums until '73 and '74 respectively. Surely Wishbone Ash shoulda been contenders with *Argus*? The lesser charted territory of Gentle Giant and Matching Mole is explored alongside groups from Italy, Greece and Germany, providing plenty to chew over for seasoned proggers. It's dished up in a chummy, unpretentious style, peppered with puns galore ('hobbit-forming', 'if it ain't baroque, don't fix it').

Claudia Elliott

Wild Colonial Boys: A Belfast Punk Story

Paul Burgess

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS

Music stories are challenged and grudges resurface.

Ruefrex are not often rated in the punk histories, but they did return to the affray in 1985 with *The Wild Colonial Boy*, a rejection of Irish-Americans, particularly the IRA fund raisers with an intent "to kill from far away". Allan Clarke sang with fury and hurt, while drummer Paul Burgess supplied a lyric that cut through the usual stories about conflict in the North. They had a series of notable songs, but Ruefrex were dysfunctional and quarrelsome and so their legacy was limited.

Paul Burgess migrated to academia, and now here's a bid to restore the picture. He writes well about working-class street gangs and the marching bands that found expression there. Punk encouraged his band to see beyond tribal politics – indeed they actively rallied around anti-sectarian themes in Belfast. This much is absorbing. But he's also dismissive of Stiff Little Fingers, Rudi, Good Vibrations Records, U2, The Pogues, Stiff Records and fellow band members. Punk has never insisted on good manners, but many valid points can get overlooked in the grudge-spray.

Stuart Bailie

Small Hours: The Long Night Of John Martyn

Graeme Thomson OMNIBUS

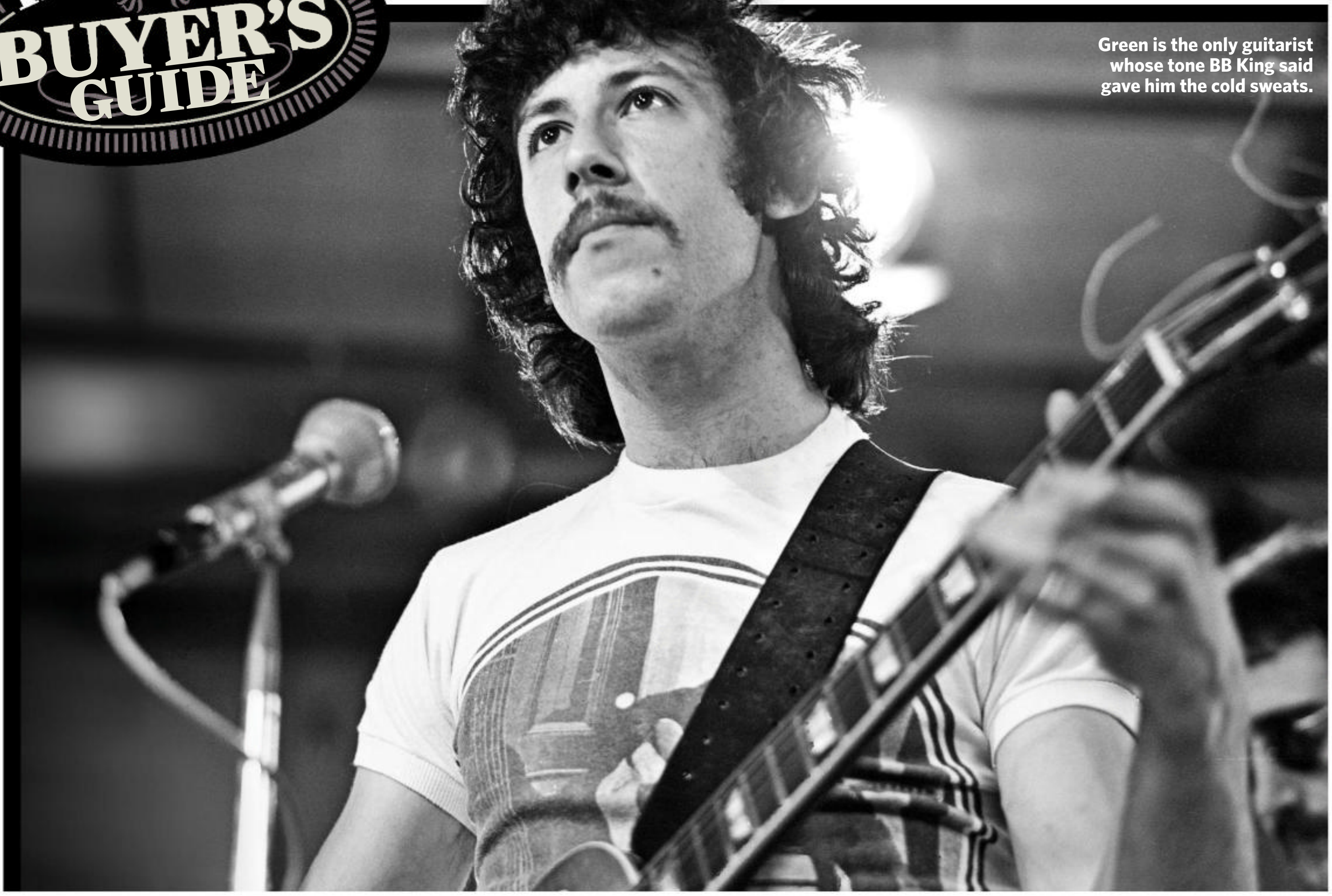
Paperback version of an impactful life story.

John Martyn was a drunk and a bum, a neglectful dad and an aggressive partner. So many parts of his life were darkly wasteful. His music was admired by few, while his adventures with guitar sonics revealed a bold vision across jazz, folk and more.

In this landmark book, first published in 2020, Graeme Thomson sees merit in the music but does not ignore the appalling decline. Martyn's lifestyle causes the amputation of a limb, and the singer notes that he's become "a living leg-end". Musicians such as Danny Thompson and Phil Collins are party to the dismal shenanigans, while Island Records gave him an artistic platform despite limited returns. He prevailed with an impressive voice and a relay of character traits: charmer, Celtic hard nut, Cockney geezer. He was gone at 60, and Thomson gathers dozens of witnesses to detail those final years. A long-lost son wants to get in touch, but the singer is unwilling. "Tell him I'm dead," says John.

Stuart Bailie

THE HARD STUFF BUYER'S GUIDE



Green is the only guitarist whose tone BB King said gave him the cold sweats.

Peter Green

Unequalled as a British-blues guitarist, singer and songwriter, he left behind a body of work studded with guitar-playing brilliance.

A uniquely soulful guitarist, singer and songwriter, Peter Green was one of the architects of British blues rock. In 1966, at the age of 19, he replaced Eric Clapton in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, and recorded the classic album *A Hard Road* which was released the following year. Many other recordings from his time in the Bluesbreakers – singles, B-sides, live performances – have (re-)surfaced in more recent times, ranging from standards like *Stormy Monday* to Green's own deep-blue compositions such as *Out Of Reach*, which further underline the supernatural brilliance of his playing.

Green then founded Fleetwood Mac in 1967 with whom he recorded three 'official' studio albums and authored a string of classic rock singles not included on any of the band's albums at the time, including: *Black Magic Woman*, *Man Of The World* and *Oh Well*. Blessed with a rich vocal tone tinged with a deep, dark sadness, he wrote world-weary lyrics that on occasions touched a nerve of unutterable despair. "I was always a sad person," Green once remarked. "I don't know why."

His melancholy disposition was not helped by the pressures and temptations of life in the rock-celebrity circus. He left Fleetwood Mac soon after taking an extended acid trip in March 1970, and released his first solo album, prophetically entitled *The End Of The Game*, in December the same year. He spent the rest of the 70s wandering through a maze of rehab clinics and mental health institutions where he was eventually diagnosed with schizophrenia. The nadir came in 1977 when he was arrested and briefly detained in prison following an incident of threatening behaviour with a shotgun.

Green's career as a musician looked to be over. But in 1979, with the help of his elder brother Michael, he released a comeback album, *In The Skies*. A string of solo albums with a motley crew of collaborators followed, until 1985 when Green again dropped out of view for another 10-year hiatus. Aided by the guitarist and singer Nigel Watson, he returned in 1996 with the Peter Green Splinter Group, who released six studio albums of variable quality before splintering for good in 2003.

In February 2020, Mick Fleetwood organised an all-star extravaganza at the London Palladium celebrating the music of Peter Green. Sadly, the absent star of the show died five months later at the age of 73.

David Sinclair

Essential Classics

John Mayall And The Bluesbreakers

A Hard Road, DECCA, 1967

The album that introduced Green to the world is a work of brooding intensity with an everlasting blues lustre. It boasts two instrumental tracks on which Green's brilliance shines through: *The Stumble*, a sprightly shuffle written by Freddie King, and Green's own *The Supernatural*, a sonic masterpiece, harnessing a series of controlled, one-note feedback loops to conjure a fabulous sense of melody and mood. Green also sings lead on *The Same Way* and *You Don't Love Me*. Subsequent expanded editions of the album include many rare and sublime recordings from the period.

Fleetwood Mac

Fleetwood Mac

BLUE HORIZON, 1968

The release of Fleetwood Mac's debut was a defining moment in the story of the British blues boom. While singer and slide guitarist Jeremy Spencer throws himself into almost parodic versions of old Elmore James riffs, Green presents a deep and meticulous understanding of the blues form on Howlin' Wolf's *No Place To Go* and his own compositions including *I Loved Another Woman* and *Looking For Somebody*. Singing and soloing with perfectly articulated feeling throughout, and also playing harmonica on *Long Grey Mare* and a resonator guitar *The World Keep On Turning*, this is Green in his blues-wailing pomp.

JAN PERSSON/GETTY

Superior Reputation cementing

Fleetwood Mac

Mr. Wonderful, BLUE HORIZON, 1968

This prompt follow-up to Fleetwood Mac's debut is fine as far as it goes, although Jeremy Spencer's endless recycling of Elmore James's *Dust My Broom* riff is wearing a bit thin by this point. A horn section beefs up the good-time shuffle of *Stop Messin' Round* and the loose Latin syncopation of *Rollin' Man*, while new addition Christine Perfect adds piano to the haunting refrain of *Love That Burns*, which ends with the line '*Please leave me in my room to cry*'. Another exquisitely mournful song, *Trying So Hard To Forget*, goes as deep into Green's troubled soul as a song can get.

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers

Live In 1967, FORTY BELOW, 2015

The latter-day discovery of a cache of live bootlegs featuring the otherwise unrecorded Bluesbreakers line-up of Mayall and Green together with John McVie (bass) and Mick Fleetwood (drums) prompted much excitement among aficionados. With good reason. This is the first of three volumes which offer a spellbinding glimpse of the full, elemental magnificence of this historic line-up playing live and unfiltered. The sound quality is patchy at times, the audiences raucous, but the performances are out of this world, and a six-minute version of *The Stumble* is simply incredible.

Fleetwood Mac

Then Play On, REPRISE, 1969

With new addition Danny Kirwan taking half the singing, songwriting and guitar duties, and four tracks given over to jams and other instrumental oddities, *Then Play On* is an album of mixed delights. The hard-core blues template has given way to a mellower psych-rock vibe, but it is Green's more traditional songs – *Rattlesnake Shake*, *Show-Biz Blues* and the melancholy *Before The Beginning* – that dominate. '*Is there nobody listening to my song?*' he sings disconsolately. The 2013 remastered edition of the album was expanded to include the hits *Oh Well (Pts 1 & 2)* and *The Green Manalishi (With The Two-Prong Crown)*.

Peter Green

The End Of The Game, REPRISE, 1970

Dense, complex and wildly experimental, Green's debut as a solo act is an exercise in improvised musical schizophrenia. Recorded swiftly after his troubled departure from Fleetwood Mac, with a line-up including Zoot Money on keyboards, it is a voyage through a landscape of strange sounds and oddly ravaged instrumental shapes. The album has been likened to Miles Davis's avant-garde fusion classic *In A Silent Way* by Larry Love of Alabama 3, and dismissed as "drivel" by allmusic.com. "I made it as an experiment because I felt restricted," Green said.

Good Worth exploring

Fleetwood Mac And Various Artists

Blues Jam At Chess Volumes 1 & 2, BLUE HORIZON, 1969

"I played too forcefully – too much and too loud," Green said reflecting on the somewhat chaotic jam/recording session that took place on January 4, 1969 at Chess studios in Chicago. In fact, Green more than holds his own in the company of original blues greats including Willie Dixon, Walter 'Shakey' Horton, Otis Spann and Buddy Guy. Playing and singing with tremendous skill and feeling, Green leads the scratch ensemble through his own song *Watch Out*, Howlin' Wolf's *Ooh Baby* and Little Walter's *Last Night*, among others. Historic.

Peter Green

In The Skies, PVK, 1979

Green's comeback album after the wilderness years of the 70s is a collection of understated melodic charm. Joined by guitarist Snowy White, who plays lead on some tracks, and a rhythm section of Pete Bardens (bass) and Reg Isidore (drums), Green turns in capable performances on several stylish instrumentals, notably *Slabo Day*, and tackles the religious/spiritual theme of the title track with a warm vocal, set to a lilting bossa nova beat. A new version of his Mac-era song *A Fool No More* provides the one truly spine-tingling moment on the album as he channels once again the deep, existential sadness of his life.

Peter Green Splinter Group

Destiny Road, SNAPPER MUSIC, 1999

Rescued from artistic oblivion once again in the 1990s, this time by the singer and guitarist Nigel Watson, Green settled into a role as nominal leader of the Splinter Group, where he played and sang mostly other people's songs. This, the group's fourth album, is a typical collection and features one of Watson's best songs *Burglar*, and a lovely reworking of Green's pulsating instrumental *Tribal Dance*. Green sings *Madison Blues* with a spectacular lack of engagement, and doesn't sing anything at all on a version of *Man Of The World* hidden away at the end – a sweet but distant echo of past glories.

Avoid

Peter Green

Kolors, CREOLE, 1983

It was great that Green rallied sufficiently to resume gigging and recording in 1979. But he was simply not the same performer after his tragic mental breakdown.

This last album as a 'solo' act is a shabby ragbag of out-takes and rejects from previous albums, most of them written by his brother Michael. The blues-funk boilerplate of *Bad Bad Feeling*, the awkward lyric of *Black Woman* and the cabaret croon of *Liquor And You* are clunky enough. But worst of all is *Funky Jam*, a rambling, one-chord rumble that bangs on artlessly and aimlessly for eight minutes, daring you to leave the track playing until the end.

Essential Playlist

Out Of Reach
B-side/A Hard Road: Expanded Edition 2006

Black Magic Woman
Single

Man Of The World
Single

Slabo Day
In The Skies

I Loved Another Woman
Fleetwood Mac

Oh Well (Pts 1 & 2)
Single/Then Play On: Expanded Edition 2013

The Green Manalishi (With The Two-Prong Crown)
Single/Then Play On: Expanded Edition 2013

A Fool No More
In The Skies

The Supernatural
A Hard Road

The Stumble
Live In 1967

Trying So Hard To Forget
Mr. Wonderful

Greeny
Crusade expanded edition 2007

Albatross
Single

Double Trouble
Live In 1967 Vol.3

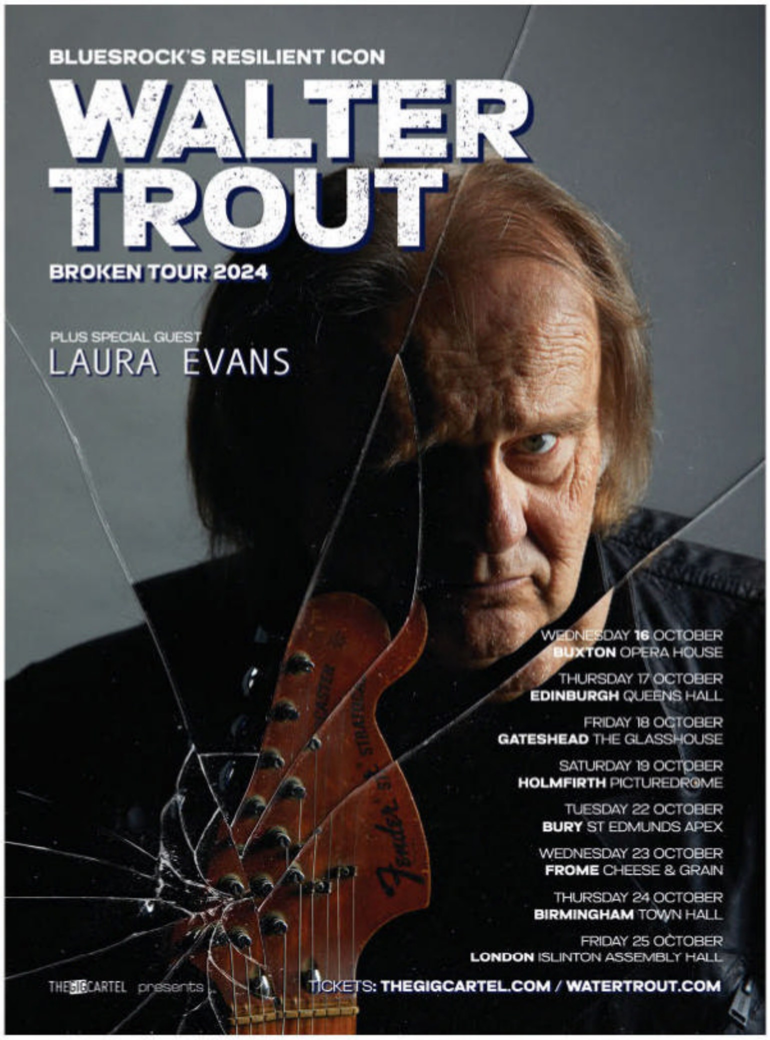
So Many Roads
Live In 1967 Vol.2

Alabama Blues
A Hard Road: Expanded Edition 2006

Long Grey Mare
Fleetwood Mac

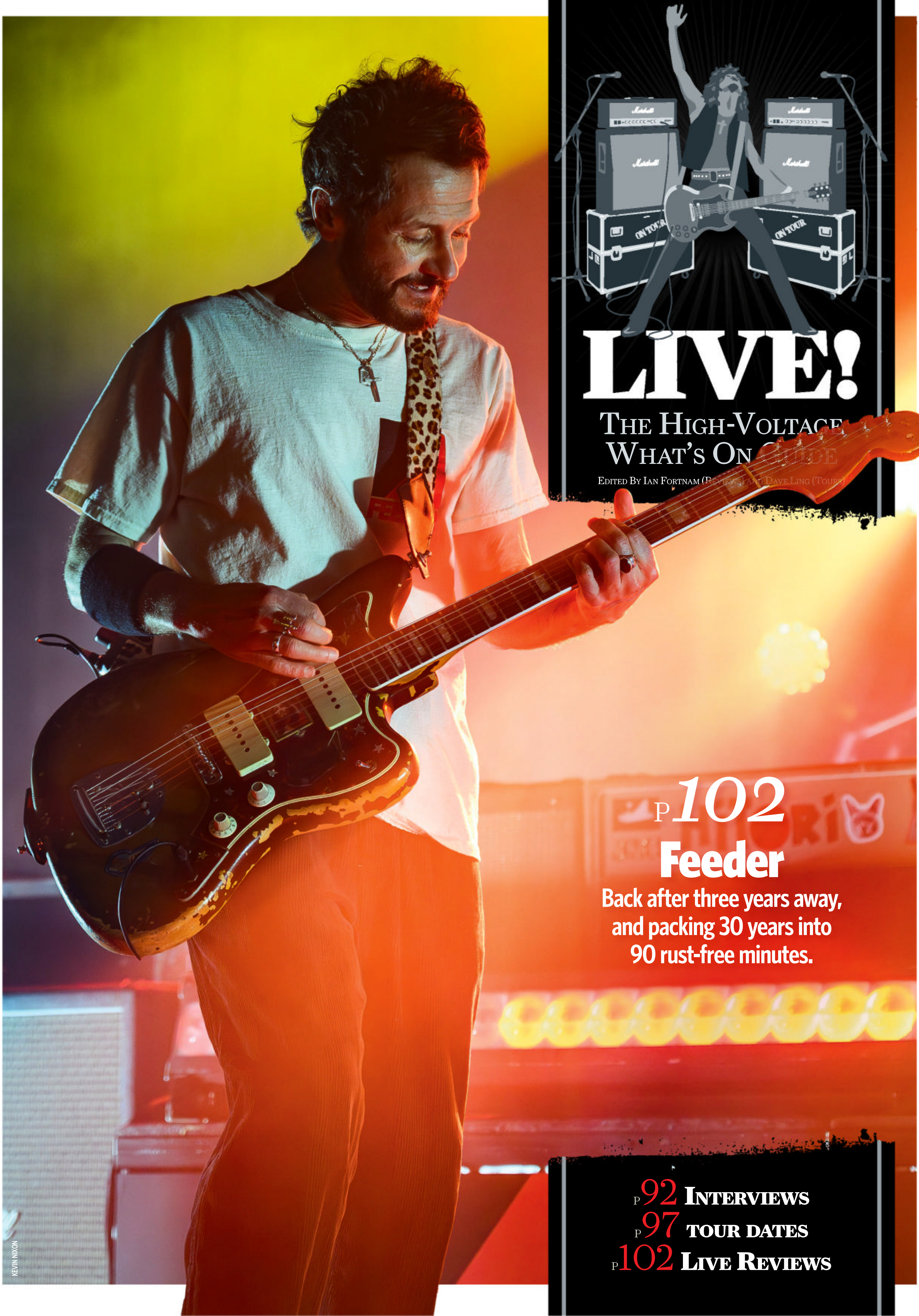
Planet Rock Blues Power
PRESENTS
ROBIN TROWER
- TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024 -
ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY
- THURSDAY 30 MAY 2024 -
GATESHEAD GLASSHOUSE
- FRIDAY 31 MAY 2024 -
HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
Tickets: planetrock.com / thegigcartel.com

THESE WICKED RIVERS
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS
MAY 17 BRIDGWATER COBBLESTONES
MAY 18 STOKE SUGARMILL
MAY 19 MANCHESTER NIGHT & DAY
MAY 24 CARDIFF CLWB IFOR BACH
MAY 25 BOURNMOUTH BEAR CAVE
MAY 31 LEICESTER 02 ACADEMY2
JUN 01 EDINBURGH BANNERMANS
JUN 02 LEEDS BRUDENELL


BLUESROCK'S RESILIENT ICON
WALTER TROUT
BROKEN TOUR 2024
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST
LAURA EVANS
WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER
BUXTON OPERA HOUSE
THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER
EDINBURGH QUEENS HALL
FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER
GATESHEAD THE GLASSHOUSE
SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER
HOLMFIRTH PICTUREDROME
TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER
BURY ST EDMUNDS APEX
WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER
FROME CHEESE & GRAIN
THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER
BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL
FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER
LONDON ISLINTON ASSEMBLY HALL
THE GIG CARTEL presents
TICKETS: THEGIGCARTEL.COM / WATERTROUT.COM

The Gig Cartel Presents
Philip Sayce
NOVEMBER
21·Leeds Brudenell
22·Gateshead The Glasshouse
23·Glasgow Oran Mor
25·Manchester BOTW
26·Nottingham Metronome
28·Bristol Fleece
29·Planet Rockstock
30·Southampton 1865
DECEMBER
3·Colchester Arts
4·London
Islington Assembly Hall
Special Guest
TROY REDFERN
PLANET ROCK

RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS
FEATURING THE RED HOT CHILLI DANCERS
NEWCASTLE TYNE THEATRE | MAY 24 2024
HARROGATE ROYAL HALL | MAY 25 2024
LONDON CADOGAN HALL | MAY 26 2024
BUXTON OPERA HOUSE | JUNE 06 2024
CARDIFF TRAMSHED | JUNE 07 2024
BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE | JUNE 08 2024
JUNE 13 2024 | BURY ST EDMUNDS THE APEX
JUNE 14 2024 | ST ALBANS ALBAN ARENA
JUNE 15 2024 | CHESTER STORY HOUSE
JUNE 20 2024 | PETERBOROUGH THE CRESSET
JUNE 21 2024 | BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL
JUNE 22 2024 | CHELTENHAM TOWN HALL



LIVE!

The High-Voltage What's On Guide

Edited By Ian Fortnam (Reviews) and Dave Ling (Tours)

KEVIN NIXON

P102

Feeder

Back after three years away, and packing 30 years into 90 rust-free minutes.

P92 Interviews
P97 Tour Dates
P102 Live Reviews

Jethro Tull

The prog veterans play 10 UK shows, with Ian Anderson hitting the rails rather than the road.

Beginning his working day with a 9am Zoom call, Jethro Tull leader Ian Anderson is a busy man. Here we talk about a new UK tour from Tull, the vinyl release of the band's great long-lost album from the 70s, and the likelihood of former guitarist Martin Barre performing with them again.

You're seventy-six. Do you still enjoy being on the road?

I don't know if 'enjoy' is the word. That's like asking Lewis Hamilton if he has had fun driving his Mercedes for the last couple of years. Remembering every one of those thousands of words and notes for a couple of hours demands intense concentration and commitment. What I don't like is the wasted time spent travelling or doing sound-checks, but without teleportation such is life. That's why I travel so much by train.

You've described yourself as "Michael Portillo with a flute". How much of the tour will be made by rail, Aslef strikes allowing?

I return home by car wherever possible because I like to sleep in my own bed, but usually I'll take the train to the show instead of a car. Barring the strikes, I use the trains a lot. And unlike in much of the rest of Europe, generally speaking I don't really have too many complaints about the service.

***The Château d'Hérouville Sessions*, the great 'lost' Tull album from 1972, is being released on double vinyl for the first time. Why did it not see the light of day for more than twenty years?**

The Château was a place at which many great albums had been made, but within a day or two we found ourselves in difficulty. We were trying to build a big concept album, and we had recorded about ten pieces, but the equipment was ailing and failing. On top of that, people were starting to come down with dysentery, bed bugs and scabies. It was a very unhappy experience. So after two weeks we took a vote and decided to go home and start work on a completely new album, which became *A Passion Play*.

ASSUNTA OPAHLE/PRESS

***The Château d'Hérouville Sessions* music was remixed by Steven Wilson, who has 'freshened up' the sound of several Tull reissues, as well as those of many other artists. What do you like about his work?**
Well, it means that I don't have to do it.

But seriously…
Steven has a comparatively younger set of ears, and is infinitely more capable than myself at dealing in the complexities of surround sound. And besides those technical skills, his enthusiasm for the music of that era – not just mine, but also of my contemporaries – is to be admired.

The forthcoming tour is called Seven Decades, and will span the band's entire career, with the promise of a few unexpected obscurities.
When you say 'spans the entire career', it will offer little snapshots of our recorded history; it might only be one or two songs from each decade because time is limited. The set-list is the best compromise possible given the demands of touring with a complex video show in different countries, with differing expectations. Things were gloriously easy back in 1969 because we only had two albums. Things are now much more tortuous. The skill is achieving a balance between the heavy hitters and our lesser-known works. For instance, *Songs From The Wood* gets rotated for a while before being replaced by *Heavy Horses* or *Farm On The Freeway*. It's all about balance.

You're uncertain as to whether or not you've played at the Palladium in London before?
I don't believe that we have. When I do take to the stage there it will inevitably conjure up memories of British TV and the heyday of variety shows. I shall think of myself of Jimmy Tarbuck with a flute.

And what about the possibility of a new studio record? Jethro Tull's most recent two albums, *The Zealot Gene* from 2022 and last year's *RökFlöte*, were made in quick succession, although after a gap of more than two decades.
They were *released* in quick succession, though most of *The Zealot Gene* was recorded back in 2017, and delayed for a variety of reasons including covid. That means we are talking a period of around five years… It wouldn't be reasonable to expect a new album until 2028. However, I do have a [projected] release date of April 2025, so hopefully I will deliver something by then.

What are the chances of Martin Barre, the band's long-serving former guitarist, now out of the band for more than a decade, ever playing again with Jethro Tull?
I have no beef with Martin. But if an interview that I saw recently on YouTube is anything to go by, then he seems a very unhappy person. I don't think that would make the atmosphere within the band very easy. Finally, after many, many, many years in which I had advised him to do so, Martin is doing his own stuff. He's in charge of his own band, rather than a circumstance in which he is *not* the songwriter, producer or manager. At last he can do things his way. Judging by the amount of shows that he's playing, he should be having a whale of a time, instead of being embittered about Jethro Tull. **DL**

Jethro Tull's 10-date tour begins in Bournemouth on April 19 and ends in Liverpool on May 6.

TINA KORHONEN/PRESS

New Model Army

The Northern powerhouse play shows in April and May.

Since forming in Bradford in 1980, New Model Army have gained a reputation as a no-compromise, conscientious rock band drawing on punk, folk, soul and even classical themes. Co-founding frontman Justin Sullivan sets the scene for a tour to promote their appropriately titled sixteenth studio album *Unbroken*.

If there's a common misperception of New Model Army, what might it be?
There were a million misperceptions about us from day one, but I don't pay much attention to them. What do *you* think they are?

Maybe that you are overly political?
[Slightly exasperated] We are not overly political in any way. We write about a lot of different aspects of life, and politics is one of them, but it's not the most important. Maybe that's our fault. We never tried to explain ourselves, or to control the narrative of what New Model Army is, we just make good music.

The new album, *Unbroken*, is bleak, but songs like *Cold Wind* remind us that human beings are stronger than we sometimes realise.
God, yeah. We live in a time of victimhood; it's cool to be a victim of some kind. I find that strange, because we are capable of so much more. You ask if we have a political agenda. But over more than two hundred and fifty songs, no we do not. What we do is present ideas. *Cold Wind* says that people should believe in themselves more.

***Reload* declares: *'If I have to see another fucking Union Jack flying on the orders of the government, I'm going to be sick.'* That needs some explanation.**
The line should make everybody laugh, I hope, but the song is about conspiracy theories, and one in particular. In broad daylight, for the last forty years, there's been a massive movement of public-owned resources from public hands to the private sector. We have all been robbed, and it's still going on. It's bringing the country to disaster.

With its opening line: *'After all the days of waiting we were suddenly released'*, *First Summer After*, the first single from *Unbroken*, at first appeared to be a covid-related song. But it's more complex than that.
It's about a road trip around Eastern Europe that I did with my father in the summer of 2022, so it was post-covid. The perfect storm that we'd been singing about for years had arrived; everywhere we went there was euphoria – we were out at last.

What would you like most for listeners to take away from *Unbroken*?
The record has a lot of energy and defiance. I hope its spirit is apparent.

If you were made Prime Minister, what are the first things you'd change?
[Laughs sarcastically] Oh, come on. Where to start? Here's an overview. The government are supposed to work on behalf of the people. [As opposition] the Labour party shouldn't be talking about anything but housing, transport, health and education, because those are the things that people require.

Back in 1987, New Model Army gave an unknown musician, the future The Almighty, Thin Lizzy and Black Star Riders frontman Ricky Warwick, his first break, as the band's touring second guitarist. How green was he back then?
Greener than green. To be honest, he still is. That's what I like about him.

Are you proud of the musician Ricky has become, and your role in that?
Yeah. But he'd have got there in the end anyway. Ricky is talented, but much more than that he's been imbued with an unbelievable spirit. He's still got that punk-rock thing going on. And he's remained a really good friend.

Going forward, do you see there being a future for the so-called 'rock star'?
Yeah. I think it's bigger than it ever was, unfortunately. It seems like the big things – the big money, everything – hoovers up all the resources of the rest. That's just the system we live in. It's horrible. **DL**

NMA's tour runs from April 18 to May 11.

"Imagine a regular rock show but there's more of everything: it's faster, louder, we jump higher and we scream more."

The Hives

No 'pretty good', "only fantastic rock music", say the once-tagged 'best band on the planet'.

On the eve of a 12-date tour by the much-travelled garage rockers from Fagersta, Sweden – once hailed by *Spin* magazine as "the best live band on the planet" – frontman Howlin' Pelle Almqvist discusses last year's *The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons*, the group's sixth album in total and their first full-length one in a decade.

Next year marks thirty years of The Hives. By their very nature, few garage bands survive for that long.
The secret of staying together is… just don't break up. People assume that this is a functional band, but we can be as dysfunctional as you like. Just don't break up.

The back story behind *The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons* – the mysterious disappearance of the band's so-called founder, sixth member and songwriter, whose absence left no new material for a decade – was pretty ingenious.
You're implying a lot of things by saying it's ingenious.

So the story isn't true?
I'm not going to bite. I wish we had released four albums in that time [since *Fitzsimmons* 'vanished'], but it didn't happen. It's like we fell into a rift in the power-space continuum. Ten years later we were back with new music.

There was even a celebration of Randy's life in London, complete with a custom-branded Hives hearse and coffin.
Yeah, yeah. There was flowers and all that stuff. We are hoping that he feigned his own death, so we tried to tease him out of the woodwork.

In your gut, do you think we have seen the last of Randy Fitzsimmons?
I'm hanging on to a sliver of hope that he's still alive. But things are looking pretty grim, unfortunately.

***Classic Rock*'s review of *The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons* dared to suggest that its limelight-shunning subject is actually the alter-ego of your brother Nicholas Arson.**
Twenty years ago the Swedish tax authorities investigated Randy and traced the money to Nicholas, but that's false. It was conducted by a pretty lazy team of private investigators.

The album wasn't too shabby. We described it as "twelve garage-rock buzz-bombs that could have detonated at any time during The Hives' mid-2000s peak".
I was very happy with the reviews. I'm sure there were people that didn't get it, but at this point they have probably given up trying to bring us down. Even those that are vaguely interested in what we do, they seemed to like it. It's not for everybody, and it's not supposed to be.

In the album's press release, you boast: "We don't do 'pretty good'. The world has enough *okay* rock music. We're only here to play fantastic rock music."
It's a goal that we set ourselves, and it took ten years to achieve it – a complete waste of time that makes absolutely no sense, but it's the only game we have.

Do you hear a lot of The Hives in any of the newer bands that are coming out?
Since we broke through, yeah I do. When we were kids there were bands like the Ramones and Motörhead, but now we have been canonised too. Now we are one of those bands. And I'm very proud of that.

You're playing some good venues, including Hammersmith Apollo in London. Is the set for this tour based on the new record?
You should expect to hear at least half of those songs, and the rest is, like, greatest hits.

For anybody who's never seen the show but might be considering buying a ticket, can you give a flavour of what to expect?
Imagine a regular rock show but there's more of everything: it's faster, louder, we jump higher and we scream more.

The Hives have shared stages with big names including AC/DC and the Rolling Stones. What remains in terms of boxes still to be ticked?
Not a lot. I've met all my heroes. I've played guitar for Iggy Pop. Now I'm reaching a ripe old age where I become the village elder and hope that people look at me the same way. **DL**

The tour ends in London on April 13.

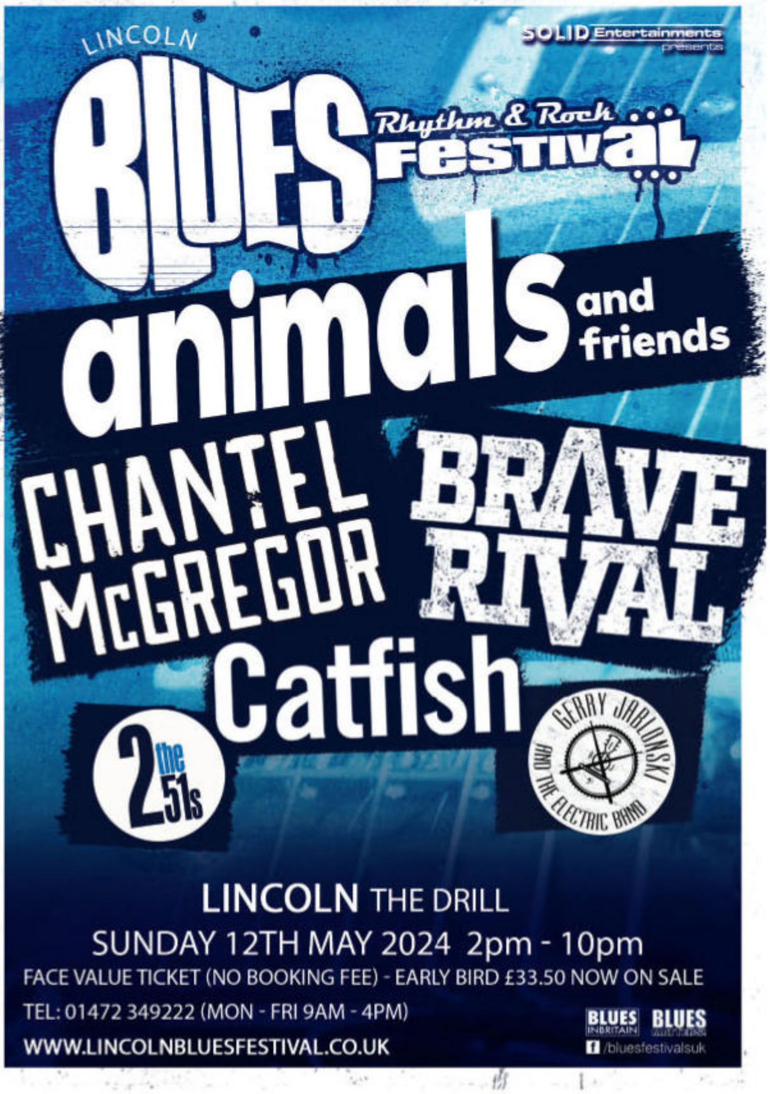
EBRU YILDIZ/PRESS

STONEDEAF PRODUCTIONS LTD. PRESENTS
STONEDEAF
ONE DAY, ONE STAGE, ONE MONSTER ROCK SHOW
SAXON
SOLD OUT
AND VERY SPECIAL GUESTS
K.K's
ECLIPSE
THE BITES
TAILGUNNER
THE HOT ONE TWO
HOSTED BY
NEWARK SHOWGROUND
24TH AUGUST 2024
£55 ARENA (£40 U14)
£70 ARENA & CAMPING (£45 U14)
STONEDEADFESTIVAL.CO.UK
PLANET ROCK
MERCIA WHISKY
CHILDREN UNDER 14 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT
ILLUSTRATION & DESIGN MICKUSHER.COM - ©2024 STONEDEAF PRODUCTIONS LTD
REBEL BASE
röad crew

SOLID Entertainments presents
GLASGOW
BLUES Rhythm & Rock FESTIVAL
CARDINAL BLACK
ELLES BAILEY
BEAUX GRIS GRIS & THE APOCALYPSE
CONNOR SELBY
GREIG TAYLOR BAND
GLASGOW ORAN MOR
SUNDAY 28TH APRIL 2024 2pm - 10pm
FACE VALUE TICKET (NO BOOKING FEE) - EARLY BIRD £28 NOW ON SALE
TEL: 01472 349222 (MON - FRI 9AM - 4PM)
BLUES INBRITAIN
BLUES MATTERS!
/bluesfestivalsuk

SOLID Entertainments Presents...
BRAVE RIVAL
2024 UK TOUR
SUN 31 MAR POYNTON CLUB @ 42
FRI 26 APR LEIGHTON BUZZARD LIBRARY THEATRE*
SAT 27 APR LEAMINGTON SPA TEMPERANCE SOLD OUT
SUN 28 APR LEAMINGTON SPA TEMPERANCE SOLD OUT
SAT 04 MAY LONDON PUTNEY HALF MOON
THU 09 MAY NOTTINGHAM BODEGA*
FRI 10 MAY WOLVERHAMPTON GIFFARD ARMS
SAT 11 MAY STOCKTON-ON-TEES BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL
SUN 12 MAY LINCOLN BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL
THU 16 MAY TRING DAVID EVANS COURT THEATRE
FRI 17 MAY CRANLEIGH ARTS CENTRE*
SAT 18 MAY BIRMINGHAM JOE JOE JIMS
FRI 14 JUN STOWMARKET JOHN PEEL CENTRE
SAT 15 JUN FAREHAM ASHCROFT ARTS CENTRE
SUN 16 JUN WORTHING THE FACTORY
SAT 22 JUN CRANBROOK THE QUEENS HALL
SAT 29 JUN CHIPPENHAM THE PEWSHAM
SAT 06 JUL ALFOLD FESTIVAL
SAT 03 AUG BUXTON BLUES FESTIVAL
SUN 04 AUG CAMBRIDGE ROCK FESTIVAL
SAT 10 AUG LEADBURY LAKEFEST
SAT 17 AUG TILFORD WEYFEST
SAT 31 AUG PETERSFIELD FESTIVAL HALL
"WATCH THEIR ASCENSION CONTINUE"
CLASSIC ROCK MAGAZINE
Support from * RAMBLIN' PREACHERS
TICKETS NOW ON SALE WWW.SOLIDENTERTAINMENTS.COM
BRAVERIVAL.COM
BRAVE RIVAL APPEARING AS SPECIAL GUESTS TO
FM
SAT 30 MAR NANTWICH CIVIC HALL
FRI 05 APR BRIGHTON CONCORDE
SAT 06 APR MILTON KEYNES THE STABLES
FRI 24 MAY SOUTHAMPTON 1865
SAT 25 MAY LONDON DINGWALLS
TICKETS: FMOFFICIAL.COM

SOLID Entertainments presents...
STRAY
ABOUT TIME
LONDON PUTNEY HALF MOON
TUESDAY 14TH MAY 2024 – 7:30PM
ADV. TICKET £16 WWW.SOLIDENTERTAINMENTS.COM
CARD HOTLINE 01472 349 222 MON–FRI 9AM–4PM
See TICKETS
gigantic


SOLID Entertainments presents
LINCOLN
BLUES Rhythm & Rock FESTIVAL
animals and friends
CHANTEL McGREGOR
BRAVE RIVAL
Catfish
2 the 51s
GERRY JABLONSKI AND THE ELECTRIC BAND
LINCOLN THE DRILL
SUNDAY 12TH MAY 2024 2pm - 10pm
FACE VALUE TICKET (NO BOOKING FEE) - EARLY BIRD £33.50 NOW ON SALE
TEL: 01472 349222 (MON - FRI 9AM - 4PM)
WWW.LINCOLNBLUESFESTIVAL.CO.UK
BLUES INBRITAIN
BLUES MATTERS!
/bluesfestivalsuk

Tour Dates

AC/DC
London	Wembley Stadium	Jul 3, 7
Dublin	Croke Park	Aug 17

BRYAN ADAMS
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 13-15
Coventry	Building Society Arena	May 17
Sheffield	Utilita Arena	May 18
Cardiff	Utilita Arena	May 19
Dublin	3 Arena	May 21
Belfast	SSE Arena	May 22

THE ANSWER
London	Camden Dingwalls	Jun 20

ANTHRAX, KREATOR, TESTAMENT
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 21
Wolverhampton	Civic	Nov 22
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 23
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 25
Glasgow	Hydro	Nov 27

RICHARD ASHCROFT
Wigan	Robin Park	Jul 20

AVERAGE WHITE BAND
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Apr 26
Birmingham	Town Hall	Apr 27
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Apr 28
Norwich	Epic Studios	Apr 30
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 2
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	May 3
Bath	Forum	May 4
Newcastle	Tyne Theatre	May 6
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	May 7
Aberdeen	Music Hall	May 8
Perth	Concert Hall	May 10
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	May 11
Nottingham	Rock City	May 13
Oxford	Academy	May 14
Cardiff	St David's Hall	May 15
York	Barbican	May 17
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	May 18

BAD TOUCH, THE KARMA EFFECT
Cambridge	Junction 2	Mar 29
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	Mar 30
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 5
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 6
London	Islington Academy 2	Apr 7
Brighton	Patterns	Apr 13

KRIS BARRAS BAND
Torquay	The Foundry	Apr 6
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Apr 12
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 13
Manchester	Academy 2	Apr 14
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 17
Newcastle	Boilershop	Apr 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Apr 19
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Apr 20

BEAUX GRIS GRIS & THE APOCALYPSE
Cardiff	Acapella Studios	Apr 5
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Apr 16
Leicester	The Musician	Apr 17
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Apr 18
Kinross	Green Hotel	Apr 19
New Marske	Institute Club	Apr 20
London	Soho Pizza Express	Apr 21
Ramsgate	Red Arrow Club	Apr 23
Leamington Spa	Temperance	Apr 24
Aldershot	West End Centre	Apr 25
Hampshire	Forest Arts Centre	Apr 26
Stockton-On-Tees	Blues At The Bay	Apr 27
Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	Apr 29
Stowmarket	John Peel Centre	May 1
Hastings	The Carlisle	May 2

BIG BIG TRAIN
Swindon	Wyvern Theatre	Sep 17
Newport	Riverfront	Sep 18
Whitley Bay	Playhouse	Sep 19
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Sep 21
Newark	Palace Theatre	Sep 22
Wavendon	The Stables	Sep 24
Manchester	Stoller Hall	Sep 25

BIG COUNTRY, THE ICICLE WORKS
Sunderland	Fire Station	Mar 29
Blackburn	King George's Hall	Mar 30
London	IndigO2	Apr 20
Leicester	Academy	Apr 26
Bath	Forum	Apr 27

BLACKBERRY SMOKE, THE STEEL WOODS
Glasgow	Academy	Sep 9
Edinburgh	Academy	Sep 10
Manchester	Apollo	Sep 12
Birmingham	Academy	Sep 13
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Sep 14

THE BLACK CROWES, THE JIM JONES ALL STARS
Manchester	Apollo	May 14
London	Hammersmith Apollo	May 15
Newcastle	City Hall	May 17
Wolverhampton	Civic	May 18

BLIND GUARDIAN
Dublin	Academy	Apr 10
Glasgow	SWG 3	Apr 12
Manchester	Academy	Apr 13
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 14

BODYCOUNT
London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 30
Manchester	The Ritz	Jul 1
Glasgow	SWG3	Jul 2

JOE BONAMASSA
London	Royal Albert Hall	Apr 4, 5

BRAVE RIVAL
Poynton	Club 42	Mar 31
Leighton Buzzard	Library Theatre	Apr 26
Leamington Spa	Temperence	Apr 27, 28
London	Putney Half Moon	May 4
Tring	David Evans Court Theatre	May 6
Wolverhampton	Giffard Arms	May 10
Tring	David Evans Court Theatre	May 16
Cranleigh	Arts Centre	May 17
Birmingham	Jo Jo Jims	May 18
Fareham	Ashcroft Arts Theatre	Jun 15

THE BREEDERS
Leeds	Academy	Jun 24
London	Limehouse Troxy	Jun 25
Manchester	Albert Hall	Jun 26
Nottingham	Rock City	Jun 28
Bristol	Sounds Festival	Jun 20

OLI BROWN & THE DEAD COLLECTIVE
Leeds	Key Club	Apr 5
Manchester	Retro	Apr 6
Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Apr 11
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Apr 13
Southampton	1865	Apr 17
London	Camden Assembly	Apr 19
Nottingham	Bodega	Apr 21
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Apr 25
Crumlin	The Patriot	Apr 26
Bristol	The Louisiana	Apr 28

BUZZCOCKS
Bedford	Esquires	Mar 29
Portsmouth	Wedgewood Rooms	May 17
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	May 24
Castleton	Paek Cavern	May 25

THE CADILLAC THREE
Dublin	Academy	May 4
Belfast	Limelight	May 5
Glasgow	Academy	May 8
Newcastle	NX	May 9
Manchester	Academy	May 11
Leeds	Academy	May 12
Nottingham	Rock City	May 14
Cardiff	Tramshed	May 16
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 17

CALIGULA'S HORSE
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 29
Bristol	Thekla	May 30
Manchester	Gorilla	May 31
London	Islington Academy	Jun 1

PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS
Buckley	Tivoli	May 9
Narberth	Queens Hall	May 10
Newport	Corn Exchange	May 11

CARDINAL BLACK
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Apr 24
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Apr 25
Chester	Live Rooms	Apr 26
Glasgow	Oran More	Apr 28
Durham	Northern Kin Festival	Jun 16
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 8
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 9
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 11
Manchester	Gorilla	Oct 16
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 17
Birmingham	Asylum	Oct 18

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

AC/DC

They're back! Possibly in black. One of the greatest bands of all time, and it could be the last time. Do anything (legal) to be there.

See left for dates. Currently July 3 and 7 and August 17.

Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 19
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Oct 24
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Oct 25
Dublin	Whelans	Nov 5
Belfast	Empire	Nov 6
Bath	Komedia	Nov 8
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Nov 9
Reading	Sub 89	Nov 15
Brighton	The Arch	Nov 16
Cardiff	Tramshed	Jan 18

ERIC CLAPTON
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	May 9
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	May 11
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	May 13
Dublin	3 Arena	May 16
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 20, 21

COLLATERAL, MIKEY BALL AND THE COMPANY
Hastings	The Carlisle	Apr 12

Recommended

ALICE COOPER, THE MEFFS
Glasgow	Ovo Arena	Oct 14
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Oct 16
Manchester	AO Arena	Oct 17
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Oct 18
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 20, 21

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

ELVIS COSTELLO & STEVE NIEVE
Glasgow	Theatre Royal	Sep 5
Gateshead	International Centre For Music	Sep 7
Manchester	Opera House	Sep 8
Liverpool	Olympia	Sep 11
Cardiff	New Theatre	Sep 14
Oxford	New Theatre	Sep 15
Bristol	Beacon	Sep 17
Poole	Lighthouse	Sep 18
London	Palladium	Sep 21
Ipswich	Regent	Sep 24
Wolverhampton	The Civic	Sep 25
Dublin	Vicar Street	Sep 27, 27, 30, Oct 1

THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN
Huddersfield	Parish	Apr 24

CROWDED HOUSE
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 13
Lincoln	Castle	Jun 15
Oxford	Blenheim Palace	Jun 16
Halifax	Piece Hall	Jun 19
Cardiff	Castle	Jun 20

ROSALIE CUNNINGHAM
Newcastle	The Cluny	May 3
Stockton-on-Tees	Georgian Theatre	May 4
Bedford	Esquires	Jun 21
London	Camden Dingwalls	Jun 22

DEAP VALLY
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jun 3
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jun 4
Manchester	Deaf Institute	Jun 5
Glasgow	King Tut's Wah Wah Hut	Jun 6
London	Dalston EartH	Jun 8
Bristol	Thekla	Jun 9

BRUCE DICKINSON, BLACK SMOKE TRIGGER
Wolverhampton	The Halls	May 16
Glasgow	Barrowland	May 18
Manchester	Academy	May 19
Swansea	Arena	May 21
Nottingham	Rock City	May 23
London	Kentish Town Forum	May 24

THE DIRTY NIL, MICROWAVE
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 15
Manchester	Gorilla	Apr 16
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Apr 17
Sheffield	Leadmill	Apr 19
Guildford	Boileroom	Apr 20
Bristol	The Fleece	Apr 22
Brighton	Patterns	Apr 23
London	King's Cross Scala	Apr 24

DOGSTAR
Manchester	New Century Hall	Jun 18
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Jun 19

EAGLES, STEELY DAN
Manchester	Co-Op Live	May 31, Jun 1, 4, 7, 8

EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Sep 11

THE FIERCE AND THE DEAD
Nottingham	JT Soar	Apr 26
Manchester	Gullivers	Apr 27
Bristol	The Gryphon	May 3
Ramsgate	Music Hall	May 4

FIREWIND, FURY
London	Camden Underworld	Mar 30

FISH
Haddington	Corn Exchange	Feb 18, 19
Manchester	Albert Hall	Feb 21
Wolverhampton	The Halls	Feb 22
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Feb 23
London	Palladium	Feb 25
Bristol	Beacon	Feb 26
Aylesbury	Waterside Arts Centre	Feb 28
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Mar 1
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 2
Liverpool	Philharmonic	Mar 5
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 6
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Mar 7
Glasgow	Academy	Mar 9, 10

FM
Nantwich	Civic Hall	Mar 30
Brighton	Concorde	Apr 5
Wavendon	The Stables	Apr 6
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 3
Gateshead	The Sage	May 4
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 5
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	May 10
Birmingham	Asylum	May 11
Cardiff	Tramshed	May 17
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	May 18
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	May 19
Southampton	1865	May 24

AC/DC: CHRISTIE GOODWIN/PRESS

LIVE!

London	Camden Dingwalls	May 25
Belfast	Limelight 2	May 30
Glasgow	Oran Mor	May 31
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Jun 1

FOCUS

Wimborne	Tivoli Theatre	Apr 25
Cardiff	Earl Haig Club	Apr 26
Falmouth	Princess Pavilion	Apr 27
Lewes	Con Club	Apr 28
Bilston	Robin 2	Apr 30
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	May 1
Sunderland	Fire Station	May 2
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	May 3
Chester	Live Rooms	May 4
Wavendon	The Stables	May 5

FOO FIGHTERS

Manchester	Old Trafford	Jun 13, 15
Glasgow	Hampden Park	Jun 17
London	Stadium	Jun 20, 21
Cardiff	Principality Stadium	Jun 25
Birmingham	Villa Park	Jun 27

FURY

Hastings	The Carlisle	Mar 29

GARBAGE

Glasgow	TRNSMT Festival	Jul 12
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Jul 14
Bridlington	Spa	Jul 15
Wolverhampton	The Halls	Jul 17
Manchester	Apollo	Jul 19
London	Wembley Arena	Jul 20

THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM

Glasgow	Academy	Jun 18
Sheffield	Academy	Jun 21
Manchester	Apollo	Jun 22
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Jun 23
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Jun 25, 26
Dublin	3 Olympia	Jun 29
Nottingham	Rock City	Jul 10
Cheltenham	2000 Trees Festival	Jul 11

GONG

Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Aug 16

GRETA VAN FLEET

London	Royal Albert Hall	Jul 14

GREEN DAY

Manchester	Old Trafford	Jun 21
Isle Of Wight	Festival	Jun 23
Glasgow	Bellahouston Park	Jun 25
Dublin	Marlay Park	Jun 27
London	Wembley Stadium	Jun 29

GREEN LUNG

Colchester	Arts Centre	Apr 30
Liverpool	Arts Club	May 15
Belfast	Limelight 2	May 16
Limerick	Dolan's Warehouse	May 17
Dublin	Grand Social	May 18
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 19

Recommended

GUN

Crumlin	The Patriot	Mar 29
Montrose	Town Hall	Apr 25
Glasgow	St Luke's	Apr 26
Dunfermline	PJ Malloys	Apr 27

JUSTIN HAWKINS

Salford	The Lowry	Mar 29
Liverpool	St George's Hall	Mar 30
Leeds	City Varieties	Mar 31

HAWKWIND

Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 3
Manchester	Academy	Apr 4
Newcastle	City Hall	Apr 5
Edinburgh	Academy	Apr 6
Glasgow	Academy	Apr 7
Belfast	Mandela Hall	Apr 8
Nottingham	Rock City	Jun 14
Durham	Northern Kin Festival	Jun 15
Bath	Forum	Aug 16
Faversham	A New Fay Festival	Aug 17

HEART, SQUEEZE

London	O2 Arena	Jul 1
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jul 3
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Jul 5
Manchester	AO Arena	Jul 6
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Jul 8
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jul 9

HIGH ON FIRE

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jun 14
Manchester	Rebellion	Jun 15

Glasgow	Slay	Jun 16
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Jun 17
Bristol	Thekla	Jun 18

THE HIVES

Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 28
Nottingham	Rock City	Mar 29
Wolverhampton	Civic Hall	Mar 30
Glasgow	Barrowland	Apr 1
Bristol	Academy	Apr 2
Brighton	Dome	Apr 3
Cardiff	Great Hall	Apr 5
Manchester	Academy	Apr 6
Dublin	Olympia	Apr 8
Norwich	UEA	Apr 10
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Apr 13

JACK J HUTCHINSON

St Austell	Band Club	Apr 24
Bosworth	Blues Festival	Apr 28
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	May 1
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	May 2

JANE'S ADDICTION

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 27, 28
Glasgow	Barrowland	May 31
Manchester	Apollo	May 3

TOBY JEPSON, WORDS & ACOUSTIC

Crumlin	The Patriot	May 10
Norwich	Brickmakers	May 12
York	The Crescent	May 14
Bridlington	Black Lion	May 15
Blackpool	Waterloo Musi Bar	May 16
Liverpool	Academy 2	May 18
Ballymena	Diamond Rock Club	Jun 1
Nottingham	Rock City Beta	Jun 6
Bristol	Thekla	Jun 7
Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	Jun 8
London	Islington Academy	Jun 9
Aberdeen	Tunnels	Jun 16
Glasgow	Garage Attic	Jun 18
Edinburgh	Mash House	Jun 19
Huddersfield	Parish	Jun 21
Hull	The Welly	Jun 22
Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	Jun 24, 25

JETHRO TULL

Bournemouth	Pavilion	Apr 19
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Apr 20
London	Palladium	Apr 22
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Apr 23
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Apr 29
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Apr 30
Gateshead	The Sage	May 2
Sheffield	City Hall	May 3
Salford	The Lowry	May 5
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	May 6

LAURENCE JONES

Lyme Regis	Marine Theatre	Mar 28
St Helens	Citadel	Apr 12
Sedgefield	Rock And Blues Club	Apr 13
Sheffield	HRH Blues Festival	Apr 14
Cranleigh	Arts Centre	Apr 20
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	May 29

JOURNEY, CHEAP TRICK

Cardiff	Utilita Arena	Oct 30
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Oct 31
Glasgow	Hydro	Nov 2
Belfast	SSE Arena	Nov 4
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 5
Manchester	AO Arena	Nov 8
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Nov 9
Liverpool	M&S Bank Arena	Nov 11
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Nov 13
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	Nov 16
London	O2 Arena	Nov 17

KARNIVOOL

Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 15
Milton Keynes	Crauford Arms	Jun 16
Brighton	Chalk	Jun 17

KID KAPICHI

Brighton	Concorde 2	Mar 28, 29
Bristol	SWX	Mar 30
Oxford	Academy	Apr 1
Norwich	Waterfront	Apr 2
Newcastle	University	Apr 4
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 5
Manchester	New Century Hall	Apr 6
Leeds	Metropolitan University	Apr 8
Sheffield	Foundry	Apr 9
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 10
London	Kentish Town Forum	Apr 12

KILL THE LIGHTS

Cardiff	Globe	Apr 19
London	Tufnell Park Dome	Apr 20
Southampton	Joiners	Apr 21
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Apr 23
Leeds	Key Club	Apr 24
Glasgow	Garage Attic	Apr 25
Manchester	Star And Garter	Apr 26
Birmingham	Asylum 2	Apr 27
Brighton	Dust	Apr 28

THE BLACK CROWES

Here's to you Messrs Robinson. With a new album to crow about they're in the UK to strut and shake that money maker again.

See previous page for dates. Currently May 14 to May 18.

JASON KEMPIN/GETTY

KIRA MAC, JAYLER

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Apr 25
Manchester	A3	Apr 26
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Apr 27
Newcastle	Anarchy Brew Co	Apr 28
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 2
Southampton	1865	May 3
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	May 4
Norwich	Waterfront	May 5
Bristol	Lost Horizon	May 8
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	May 9
London	Camden Underworld	May 10
Stoke-on-Trent	Underground	May 11

THE KORGIS

Lewes	Con Club	Apr 5
Edinburgh	Mash House	Apr 26
Glasgow	Hug & Pint	Apr 27
Ibstock	The Palace	Jun 1
Cardiff	Acapela Studio	Jun 6
Selby	Town Hall	Oct 3
Kinross	Green Hotel	Oct 5

RICHIE KOTZEN

London	Islington Academy	Jun 13

LOVE FEATURING JOHNNY ECHOLS

Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Jul 10
Birmingham	Hare & Hounds	Jul 11
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Jul 12
Liverpool	Academy 2	Jul 13
Guildford	Boileroom	Jul 15
Southampton	1865	Jul 17
Brighton	Concorde 2	Jul 18
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jul 20
Newcastle	Gosforth Civic	Jul 24
Edinburgh	The Caves	Jul 25
Glasgow	St Luke's	Jul 26
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Jul 29
Bristol	The Fleece	Aug 1
Cardiff	Earl Haig Club	Aug 2
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Aug 3

ERJA LYYTINEN

Faversham	Old Brewery Store	Apr 4
Newcastle	The Cluny	Apr 5
Edinburgh	Voodoo Rooms	Apr 6
York	Crescent Community Centre	Apr 7
Southampton	1865	Apr 9
London	Putney Half Moon	Apr 10
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Apr 11
Melton Mowbray	Eastwell Village Hall	Apr 12
Sheffield	Academy	Apr 13
Dudley	Lamp Tavern	Apr 14

MANIC STREET PREACHERS, SUEDE

Llangollen	International Musical Eisteddfod	Jun 28
Dublin	Trinity College	Jul 2
Cardiff	Castle	Jul 5
Edinburgh	Castle	Jul 10
Manchester	Castlefield Bowl	Jul 12
Leeds	Millennium Square	Jul 13
London	Alexandra Palace Park	Jul 18

RICHARD MARX

Bath	Forum	May 17
Liverpool	Philharmonic	May 18
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	May 19
London	Royal Albert Hall	May 22

NICK MASON'S SAUCERFUL OF SECRETS

Hanley	Victoria Hall	Jun 11
York	Barbican	Jun 11
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Jun 13
Oxford	New Theatre	Jun 15
Bristol	Beacon	Jun 17
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 18
Manchester	Apollo	Jun 19
Glasgow	SEC	Jun 21
Gateshead	The Glasshouse	Jun 22
Cardiff	Millenium Centre	Jun 24
Poole	Lighthouse	Jun 25
Brighton	Dome	Jun 26
Ipswich	Regent	Jun 28
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 29

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND

London	Royal Albert Hall	Apr 24, 25
Dublin	3 Arena	Apr 27
Manchester	Apollo	Apr 29

CHANTEL McGREGOR

Hertford	Corn Exchange	May 23
Rotherham	Chantry Brewery	Jun 8
Cardiff	Acapela Studios	Jun 13
Durham	Northern Kin Festival	Jun 16
Bradford	Tapestry	Jun 21
Hastings	The Carlisle	Jul 5
Linton	Blues Festival Jun	Jul 6
Worthing	The Factory Live	Jul 18
Ripley	Town Hall	Jul 20

MARCO MENDOZA TRIO

Belfast	Limelight 2	May 30
Mayo	Jesters	May 31
Dublin	Thomas House	Jun 1
Llandudno	Motorsport Lounge	Jun 2
Newcastle	Trillians	Jun 3
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jun 4
Sheffield	Corporation	Jun 5
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Jun 6
Wolverhampton	Giffard Arms	Jun 7
Bradford	Nightrain	Jun 8
Hastings	The Carlisle	Jun 9

MIDNITE CITY, CONTINENTAL LOVERS

Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Apr 5
Newcastle	Trillians	Apr 12
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Apr 13
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Apr 26
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Apr 27
Birmingham	Billesley Rock Club	May 3
Nottingham	Old Cold Store	May 4
Bradford	Nightrain	May 10
London	Tufnell Park Dome	May 11

MR. BIG

Maidstone	Maid Of Stone Festival	Jul 21
Leeds	Academy	Jul 22
Liverpool	Academy	Jul 27
Ebbw Vale	Steelhouse Festival	Jul 28

MR BUNGLE

London	Kentish Town Forum	Jun 12
Manchester	The Ritz	Jun 13
Donington Park	Download Festival	Jun 14

NEW MODEL ARMY

Dublin	Opium	Apr 18
Belfast	Mandela Hall	Apr 19
Glasgow	Garage	Apr 20
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Apr 21
Cambridge	Junction	Apr 23
Southampton	1865	Apr 24
Bristol	Marble Factory	Apr 25
Wolverhampton	Wulfrun Hall	Apr 26
Leeds	Academy	Apr 27
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 11

NICKELBACK

Glasgow	Hydro	May 16
Manchester	AO Arena	May 20
London	O2 Arena	May 21
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	May 23

STEVIE NICKS

London	Hyde Park BST	Jul 12

GARY NUMAN

Norwich	UEA	May 19
Sheffield	Leadmill	May 20
Glasgow	Academy	May 21
Newcastle	City Hall	May 23
Manchester	The Ritz	May 24, Jun 5, 6
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	May 25, Jun 8
Bristol	Academy	May 27
Cardiff	Tramshed	May 28
Bournemouth	Academy	May 30
Birmingham	Institute	May 31
Nottingham	Rock City	Jun 1
Leeds	Academy	Jun 3
Liverpool	Academy	Jun 4

JOHN OTWAY & WILD WILLY BARRETT

Barnsoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	Mar 31
Nantwich	Jazz, Blues & Music Festival	Apr 1
Frome	Merlin Theatre	Apr 6
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Apr 7
Cambridge	Storey's Field Centre	May 4
Hull	Social	Jul 28

PEARL JAM

Dublin	Marlay Park	Jun 22
Manchester	Co-op Live	Jun 25
London	Tottenham Hotspur Stadium	Jun 29

ROBERT PLANT PRESENTS SAVING GRACE FEATURING SUZI DIAN, TAYLOR McCALL

Blackburn	King George's Hall	Mar 29
Harrogate	Royal Hall	Apr 30
Stockton-on-Tees	Globe	May 1
Warwick	Arts Centre	May 3
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Jul 23
Woking	New Victoria Theatre	Jul 24

PRAYING MANTIS

Hastings	The Carlisle	Apr 25
London	Stratford Chart & Horses	Apr 26

THE PROFESSIONALS

Birmingham	Castle & Falcon	Apr 11
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Apr 12
Cardiff	Clwb Ifor Bach	Apr 13
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Apr 14

NATHANIEL RATELIFF & THE NIGHT SWEATS

London	Hammersmith Apollo	Jun 22
Manchester	Albert Hall	Jun 25
Glasgow	Academy	Jun 26
York	Barbican	Jun 27
Bristol	SWX	Jun 29
Wolverhampton	The Halls	Jun 30

TROY REDFERN

Frome	The Treehouse	Jun 17
Manchester	Retro	Jun 18
Glasgow	Hard Rock Café	Jun 19
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jun 20
Chester	Live Rooms	Jun 21
Birmingham	Asylum 2	Jun 22
Guildford	Boilerroom	Jun 23
Cambridge	Junction	Jun 24
Southampton	Joiners Arms	Jun 25
London	New Cross Inn	Jun 26
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Jun 27

THE RESIDENTS

Glasgow	City Hall	Apr 2
Manchester	Albert Hall	Apr 3
Birmingham	Town Hall	Apr 5
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Apr 6
London	Barbican Centre	Apr 8

RIVERSIDE, KLONE

Norwich	Epic Studios	May 12
Birmingham	Institute	May 13
Belfast	Limelight	May 15
Dublin	Academy	May 16
Glasgow	Old Fruit Market	May 18
London	Camden Koko	May 19

Bristol	SWX	May 20
Manchester	The Ritz	May 21

ROMEO'S DAUGHTER (UNPLUGGED)

Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	May 22

DARIUS RUCKER

Manchester	Apollo	Apr 27
Newcastle	City Hall	Apr 28
Birmingham	Academy	Apr 30
Bristol	Beacon	May 1
London	Hammersmith Apollo	May 3
Leeds	Academy	May 5
Glasgow	Academy	May 6
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	May 9
Belfast	Waterfront Hall	May 11

SAD CAFÉ

Birmingham	Jam House	Apr 13
London	Holborn Pizza Express	Apr 14, 15
Barnoldswick	Arts Centre	Jun 15
Cardiff	Acapela Studios	Jun 16
Buxton	Opera House	Jul 14

Recommended

PHILIP SAYCE, TROY REDFERN

Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 21
Gateshead	Glasshouse	Nov 22
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Nov 23
Manchester	Band On The Wall	Nov 25
Nottingham	Metronome	Nov 26
Bristol	The Fleece	Nov 28
Southampton	1865	Nov 30
Colchester	Arts Centre	Dec 3

TO BE RETAINED ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

SARI SCHORR, MATT PEARCE & THE MUTINY

York	The Crescent	Apr 17
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Apr 18
Newcastle	Anarchy Brew Co	Apr 19
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Apr 20
Leek	Foxlowe Arts Centre	Apr 21
Grimsby	Docks	Apr 24
Birmingham	Castle & Falcon	Apr 25
Gloucester	Guildhall	Apr 26
London	Highbury Garage	Apr 27
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Apr 28

SCORPIONS, EXTREME

London	Wembley Arena	Jun 8

CONNOR SELBY

Luton	Bear Club	Apr 4
Teignmouth	Jazz And Blues	Apr 18
Glasgow	Blues, Rhythm & Rock Fest	Apr 24
Twickenham	Eel Pie Club	Jun 13
Aldershot	West End Centre	Jun 14
Fareham	Ashcroft Arts Centre	Jun 22

SEPULTURA, JINJER, OBITUARY

Manchester	Academy	Nov 8
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Nov 9
Belfast	Telegraph Building	Nov 10
Glasgow	Barrowland Ballroom	Nov 11
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 12

SLASH FEAT MYLES KENNEDY & THE CONSPIRATORS, MAMMOTH WVH

Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Mar 30
Newcastle	City Hall	Mar 31
Manchester	AO Arena	Apr 2
Glasgow	The Hydro	Apr 3
London	Wembley Arena	Apr 5

SMASHING PUMPKINS, WEEZER

Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Jun 7
London	O2 Arena	Jun 8
Dublin	3 Arena	Jun 10
Glasgow	The Hydro	Jun 12
Manchester	Co-op Live	Jun 13
Cardiff	Castle	Jun 14

PATTI SMITH QUARTET

Brighton	Dome	Jun 25

THE SOUTHERN RIVER BAND

London	Camden Underworld	May 15
Brighton	Great Escape Festival	May 17
Cornwall	Tunes In The Dunes Festival	May 19
Liverpool	District	May 21
Dublin	Workmans Club	May 22

SPIKE'S QUIREBOYS, WILLIE DOWLING

Sheffield	Corporation	May 9
Newcastle	Riverside	May 10
Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	May 11
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	May 12

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

Cardiff	Principality Stadium	May 5

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

GARBAGE

Shirley Manson might be the focal point, but this band deliver class musicianship on some great songs.

Se opposite page for dates. Currently July 12 to July 20.

Belfast	Boucher Road	May 9
Kilkenny	Nowlan Park	May 12
Cork	Páirc Uí Chaoimh	May 16
Dublin	Croke Park	May 19
Sunderland	Stadium Of Light	May 22
London	Wembley Stadium	Jul 25, 27

STATUS QUO

Belfast	Botanic Gardens	May 28
Scarborough	Open Air Theatre	Jun 2
Swansea	Arena	Jun 4
Wolverhampton	The Halls	Jun 5
Halifax	Piece Hall	Aug 13
Margate	Dreamland	Aug 15
Taunton	Vivary Park	Aug 23

SUNN O)))

Manchester	New Century Hall	Mar 28
Bexhill-on-Sea	De La Warr Pavilion	Mar 30
Bristol	Marble Factory	Mar 31
London	Barbican Centre	Apr 1
Coventry	Empire	Apr 2

TEN

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jun 8
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Jun 30
Manchester	Academy	Jul 13
Cambridge	Portland Arms	Jul 20
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Jul 27
Grimsby	Yardbirds Club	Aug 17
Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Sep 7

TENACIOUS D

Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	May 7
Manchester	AO Arena	May 8
Glasgow	The Hydro	May 9
Leeds	First Direct Arena	May 11
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	May 12
Brighton	Centre	May 13

THESE WICKED RIVERS, SHE BURNS RED

Bridgwater	Cobblestones	May 17
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugar Mill	May 18
Manchester	Night & Day Café	May 19
Cardiff	Club Ifor Bach	May 24
Bournemouth	Bear Cave	May 25
Lincolnshire	Call Of The Wild Festival	May 26
Leicester	Academy	May 31
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jun 1
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Jun 2

THIRTY SECONDS TO MARS

Glasgow	The Hydro	Apr 16
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Apr 17
Manchester	AO Arena	Apr 19
Birmingham	Utilita Arena	Apr 20
Cardiff	Utilita Arena	Apr 22
London	O2 Arena	Apr 23

RICHARD THOMPSON

Cambridge	Corn Exchange	May 25
Bristol	Beacon	May 26
York	Barbican	May 27
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	May 29
Gateshead	Glasshouse	May 30
Manchester	Aviva Studios	May 31
Hanley	Victoria Hall	Jun 1
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 3
Cardiff	New Theatre	Jun 4

Portsmouth	Guildhall	Jun 5
Brighton	Dome	Jun 6
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 8

TIGERTAILZ

Buckey	Tivoli	Jul 19
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jul 20
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Jul 21
Cardiff	Tramshed	Aug 10

TOOL

Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	May 30
Manchester	AO Arena	Jun 1
London	O2 Arena	Jun 3

WALTER TROUT, LAURA EVANS

Buxton	Opera House	Oct 16
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 17
Gateshead	Glasshouse	Oct 18
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 19
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Oct 22
Frome	Cheese & Grain	Oct 23
Birmingham	Town Hall	Oct 24
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Oct 25

ROBIN TROWER

Southampton	The Brook	May 27
London	Islington Assembly Hall	May 28
Gateshead	Glasshouse	May 30
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	May 31

MARTIN TURNER EX-WISHBONE ASH

Cardiff	Globe	Apr 18
Frome	Tree House	Apr 19
Maidenhead	Norden Farm Arts Centre	Apr 20
Lewes	Con Club	Apr 21
Norwich	Maddermarket Theatre	Apr 25
Lowdham	Village Hall	May 17
Sheffield	Greystones	May 18
Bilston	Robin 2	May 19
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Sep 4
Southampton	1865	Sep 5
Hastings	White Rock Theatre	Sep 6
Aylesbury	Waterside Theatre	Sep 7
Deal	Astor Theatre	Sep 12
Sudbury	Quay Theatre	Sep 13
Knaresborough	Frazer Theatre	Sep 14
Barnoldswick	Music & Arts Centre	Sep 19
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Sep 20
Newcastle	The Cluny	Sep 21
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Sep 26
London	Camden The Forge	Oct 3
Chelmsford	Social Club	Oct 4

TWIN ATLANTIC

Glasgow	Academy	May 23

TYGERS OF PAN TANG

Preston	The Continental	May 2
London	Tufnell Park Boston Music Room	May 3
Merthyr Tydfill	The Crown	May 4
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven Club	May 5

VILLE VALO

London	Royal Albert Hall	May 10

WARRIOR SOUL

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Jul 10
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Jul 11

KEVIN WINTER/GETTY

LIVE!

London	Stratford Cart & Horses	Jul 12
Nottingham	Bootleggers	Jul 13
Coalville	The Victoria	Jul 14
Newcastle	Trillians	Jul 17
Glasgow	Venue TBC	Jul 18

DARREN WHARTON'S RENEGADE

Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jun 6
London	Islington Academy	Jun 7
Birmingham	Institute	Jun 8
Bury	The Met	Jun 9

WHEN RIVERS MEET

Southampton	The Brook	Apr 27
Bristol	Thekla	Apr 28
Manchester	Gorilla	May 2
Glasgow	St Luke's	May 3
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	May 4
Norwich	Epic Studios	May 9
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	May 10
London	Highbury Garage	May 11

HANNAH WICKLUND

Chester	Live Rooms	May 24
Sheffield	Corporation	May 25
Cardiff	Globe	May 26
Dublin	Grand Social	May 28
Belfast	Ulster Sports Club	May 29
Glasgow	G2	May 31
Newcastle	Anarchy Brew Co	Jun 1
Leeds	Headrow House	Jun 2
Bristol	Strange Brew	Jun 4

CJ WILDHEART

Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Apr 18
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Apr 19
Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	Apr 20
Tunbridge Wells	Forum	Apr 24
Southampton	Joiners Arms	Apr 25
Buckley	Tivoli	Apr 26
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Apr 28

THE WILDHEARTS, LADYHAWKE, ASOMVEL

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Jun 6

WILLE & THE BANDITS

London	Putney Half Moon	Mar 28
Southampton	The Brook	Mar 29
Liskeard	Carnglave Caverns	Mar 30
Bristol	Thekla	Mar 31

WISHBONE ASH

Derby	Flowerpot	Sep 20
Chester	Live Rooms	Sep 21
Lytham	Lowther Pavilion	Sep 23
Southport	Atkinson Theatre	Sep 24
Carlisle	Old Fire Station	Sep 26
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Sep 27
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	Sep 28
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Sep 29
Whitley Bay	Playhouse	Oct 1
Stockton-on-Tees	ARC	Oct 2
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 3
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 4
Bury	The Met	Oct 5
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Oct 7
Hunstanton	Princess Theatre	Oct 8
Lincoln	The Drill	Oct 9
Walsall	Arena And Arts Centre	Oct 10
Rugby	Benn Hall	Oct 11
Worcester	Huntingdon Hall	Oct 12
Wavendon	The Stables	Oct 14
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Oct 15
Southampton	The Brook	Oct 16
Wimborne	Tivoli	Oct 17
Devizes	Corn Exchange	Oct 18
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 19
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 21
Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 22
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Oct 23
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Oct 24

Y&T

Southampton	The Brook	Oct 22
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 23
London	Islington Academy	Oct 25
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 26
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 27
Glasgow	St Luke's	Oct 30
Newcastle	Northumbria Students Union	Nov 1
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 2

YES

Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	May 23
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	May 24
Liverpool	Philharmonic Hall	May 26
York	Barbican	May 28
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	May 29
Bristol	Beacon	May 31
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Jun 1
Gateshead	The Sage	Jun 2
London	Royal Albert Hall	Jun 4

HANS ZIMMER

Glasgow	The Hydro	Apr 6
Manchester	AO Arena	Apr 7
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Apr 9
London	O2 Arena	Apr 10

THE ZOMBIES

Poole	Lighthouse	May 21
Exeter	Corn Exchange	May 22
Buxton	Opera House	May 24
Manchester	RNCM	May 26
Leeds	City Varieties	May 27
Birmingham	Town Hall	May 28
Whitley	Bay Playhouse	May 30
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Jun 1
Bristol	St George's Hall	Jun 4
London	Barbican Centre	Jun 7
Kendal	Brewery Arts Centre	Jun 14

ZZ TOP, RIVAL SONS, THOSE DAMN CROWS

London	Wembley Arena	Jul 11

Festivals

2000 TREES
THE GASLIGHT ANTHEM, MORE

Cheltenham	Upcote Farm	Jul 10-13

BEARDED THEORY
JANE'S ADDICTION, DINOSAUR JR, NEW MODEL ARMY, MORE

Derbyshire	Catton Hall	May 23-26

BEAUTIFUL DAYS
RICHARD ASHCROFT, TOYAH & ROBERT FRIPP, LEVELLERS, MORE

Devon	Escot Park	Aug 16-18

BLACK DEER
SHERYL CROW, SEASICK STEVE, MORE

Kent	Eridge Park	Jun 14-16

BLOODSTOCK
OPETH, AMON AMARTH, CLUTCH, MORE

Derbyshire	Catton Park	Aug 8-11

BRADSTOCK
SOUTH OF SALEM, CJ WILDHEART, EMPYRE, MORE

Bradford	Nightrain	May 4

CALL OF THE WILD
TYKETTO, BAD TOUCH, SOUTH OF SALEM, MORE

Lincolnshire	Showground	May 24-26

CAMBRIDGE FOLK FESTIVAL
ROBERT PLANT & SAVING GRACE, TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS, FANTASTIC NEGRITO, MORE

Cambridge	Cherry Hinton Hall	Jul 25-28

CHELTENHAM JAZZ FESTIVAL
ROBERT PLANT & SAVING GRACE, ROGER DALTREY, COURTNEY PINE, MORE

Cheltenham	Montpellier Gardens	May 1-6

CORNWALL ROCKS
DARE, BRAVE RIVAL, COLLATERAL, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Park	Oct 4-6

CROPREDY
RICK WAKEMAN, BIG BIG TRAIN, FOCUS, MORE

Oxfordshire	Cropredy	Aug 8-10

DESERTFEST
MASTERS OF REALITY, GODFLESH, BRANT BJORK TRIO, MORE

London	Camden [various venues]	May 17-19

DOWNLOAD
QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, AVENGED SEVENFOLD, PANTERA, MORE

Leicestershire	Donington Park	Jun 14-16

FIREVOLT
VANDENBERG, GUN, STONE BROKEN, MORE

Stockport	Whitebottom Farm	Aug 9-11

GLASGOW BLUES RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL
CARDINAL BLACK, ELLES BAILEY, CONNOR SELBY, MORE

Glasgow	Oran Mor	Apr 28

HARD ROCK HELL PROG
PENDRAGON, ARTHUR BROWN, COLOSSEUM, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Park	Nov 14-17

HARD ROCK HELL SLEAZE
HOUSE OF LORDS, SANTA CRUZ, SPACE AGE PLAYBOYS, MORE

She ffield	Academy	Sep 6-8

CLASSIC ROCK RECOMMENDS

STEVIE NICKS

The mighty Mac might now be put to rest, but the singer and writer of some of their greatest songs, and others, sings on.

London	Hyde Park BST	Jul 12

HIGHWAYS
THE CADILLAC THREE, BRETT YOUNG, SHANE SMITH & THE SAINTS, MORE

London	Royal Albert Hall	May 17, 18

Recommended

ISLE OF WIGHT
THE DARKNESS, GREEN DAY, THE PRODIGY, MORE

Newport	Seaclose Park	Jun 20-23

TO BE RETAINED — ISSUED SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS ON BACK

KENDAL BLUES RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL
ALICE ARMSTRONG, BLUE NATION, JAMES OLIVER, MORE

Kendal	Brewery Arts Centre	Apr 13

LATITUDE
DURAN DURAN, KASABIAN, KEANE, MORE

Suffolk	Henham Park	Jul 25-28

LINCOLN BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK
THE ANIMALS, CHANTEL McGREGOR, BRAVE RIVAL, MORE

Lincoln	Drill Hall	May 12

THE LONG ROAD
BLACKBERRY SMOKE, THE SHEEPDOGS, MORE

Leicestershire	Stanford Hall	Aug 23-25

LOOE BLUES RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL
DOM MARTIN, ALICE ARMSTRONG, CONNOR SELBY, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Resort	Dec 6-8

LOVE ROCKS
THE ANSWER, THE TREATMENT, MORE

Dorset	St Leonards Fam	Jun 20-22

MAID OF STONE
MR. BIG, WOLFMOTHER, LIVING COLOUR, MORE

Maidstone	Mote Park	Jul 19-21

MAYORS FEST
TERRORVISION, THE HOT DAMN!, SHE BURNS RED, MORE

Wolverhampton	KK's Steelmill	Apr 6

NENE VALLEY ROCK FESTIVAL
NEKTAR, CARAVAN, DARREN WHARTON'S RENEGADE, MORE

Lincolnshire	Grimethorpe Castle	Sep 5-8

A NEW DAY FESTIVAL
HAWKWIND, TANGERINE DREAM, GONG, FOCUS, MORE

Faversham	Mount Ephraim Gardens	Aug 16-18

NORTHERN KIN
HAWKWIND, CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN, WATERBOYS, MORE

Durham	Thornley Hall Farm	Jun 14-16

RADAR
TESSERACT, THE MIDNIGHT, DIRTY LOOPS, MORE

Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Jul 26-26

READING AND LEEDS FESTIVALS
BLINK 182, LIAM GALLAGHER, THE PRODIGY, MORE

Reading	Little John's Farm	Aug 23-25
Leeds	Braham Park	Aug 23-25

SOUNDLE WEEKEND
SOLSTICE, THE EMERALD DAWN, JOHN HACKETT, MORE

Peterborough	Key Theatre	Jun 1, 2

STEELHOUSE
THE ALMIGHTY, MR. BIG, ACCEPT, SKINDRED, MORE

Ebbw Vale	Hafod-y-Dafal Farm	Jul 26-28

STONEDEAD
KK'S PRIEST, DORO, ECLIPSE, MORE

Newark	Showground	Aug 24

TAKEDOWN
CREEPER, TERRORVISION, DINOSAUR PILE-UP, MORE

Portsmouth	Guildhall	Apr 13, 14

TOMORROW'S GHOST FESTIVAL
CREEPER, PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT, SKELETAL FAMILY, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov [redacted]

TOWER OF FIRE
NITRATE, ATACK, REMEDY, SARACEN, MORE

Manchester	Rebellion	Jun 29

UK BLUES RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL
ARTHUR BROWN, KING KING, CHANTAL McGREGOR, MORE

Blackpool	Winter Gardens	Jan 31-Feb 2

WEYFEST
MARTIN TURNER, XANDER & THE PEACE PIRATES, NEONFLY, MORE

Tilford	Rural Life Museum	Aug 18-24

WHITBY ROCKS
FM, JACK J HUTCHINSON, THE HOT DAMN!, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 8

WHITBY BLUES RHYTHM AND ROCK FESTIVAL
BLUE NATION, CONNOR SELBY, CATFISH, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 9, 10

WIDE AWAKE
KING GIZZARD AND THE LIZARD WIZARD, MORE

London	Brockwell Park	May 25

Y NOT FESTIVAL
ROYAL BLOOD, PAUL WELLER, KASBIAN, MORE

Derbyshire	Pikehall	Aug 2-4

KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY

OFFICIAL CLASSIC ROCK MERCH

WEAR SOMETHING LOUD

VISIT: **BIT.LY/CROCKTEES**

EXCLUSIVE, QUALITY MERCH. ORIGINAL AND OFFICIAL.

'Back after a three-year break, the band show no sign of rustiness.'

Feeder deliver plenty of new songs along with the hits and fan favourites.

Feeder

Bexhill-on-Sea De La Warr Pavilion

Newport post-grunge noiseniks celebrate 30 years by throwing a fuss-free party.

★ With a string of 25 Top 75 hits dating back to 1997's *Tangerine*, Feeder have been around for three decades now. Not that you'd know it. There's no ostentatious display of anniversary survival tonight. Feeder have never been the type of band to nostalgically perform past albums in their entirety, or metaphorically hang out the bunting as another year passes. Welsh singer, guitarist and songwriter Grant Nicholas is more concerned with summoning their next radio-friendly ear worm.

Alongside Nicholas still stands Taka Hirose, who became Feeder's bass player after arriving in London from Japan 39 years ago. As a non-writer, Hirose's exact role within the band is slightly uncertain, although those who saw the recent documentary on Wham! may consider that he supports Nicholas in the way that Andrew Ridgely was a loyal, crucial foil to George Michael. Hirose's continued presence must also soothe the absence of original drummer Jon Lee, who stunned the band and their fans by taking his own life in 2002.

A product of the post-grunge revolution, Feeder are among a select gathering of Britrock bands to have not only endured, but thrived. Early contemporaries such as Baby Chaos, Joyrider, Cecil, Apes Pigs & Spacemen and even 3 Colours Red fell by the wayside, but Nicholas's writing skills continued to blossom, and the toehold provided by single *Buck Rogers* making the top five in 2001 equipped Feeder to outlive many others.

This is the second night of an 18-date British tour. And while tickets remain for tonight's show at the 1,000-capacity De La Warr Pavilion, for a cold, wet Sunday night in a sleepy Sussex coastal town the attendance at this art deco theatre is impressive.

Back after a three-year break, the band show no sign of rustiness. Many influences are embedded in Feeder's music, from Foo Fighters and Muse to Smashing Pumpkins and even a smidgen of Coldplay, but for all their occasional darkness the songs ring out with power and authenticity. Last issue, Nicholas told *Classic Rock* that despite having got "cold feet" last time out, with their twelfth studio album, Feeder could "get away" with making their newie, *Black/Red*, a double album. "We've toured with Coldplay, we're a band that can tour with Queens Of The Stone Age or U2," he continued. "We've got a real breadth of sound and dynamic."

Those qualities perfectly define *ELF*, one of six new songs aired, and a thunderous yet deeply hummable 'welcome to the stage' moment. A third of tonight's set-list comes from a record that remains largely unheard apart for a handful of singles, an act of bravery vindicated by the quality of *The Knock, Hey You, Playing With Fire, Soldiers Of Love* and *Lost In The Wilderness*, the latter a glorious slice of summery whimsy earmarked as another single.

But we came to hear the hits, and Feeder delve all the way back to the aforementioned *Tangerine*, their debut single, along with *Fear Of Flying* and a divine *Just The Way I'm Feeling*, and in the final third of the set roar through *Insomnia, High* and *My Perfect Day*.

It feels delightfully appropriate when, during a three-song encore that also includes a triumphant *Just A Day*, Feeder channel spirits old and new, throwing snippets of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and *Paranoid* into their signature anthem *Buck Rodgers*. Gen Z meets Year Zero – the perfect storm from a band that deserves way more respect than they get.

Complaints? Well, a dozen albums from which to pick just 90 minutes on stage seems fairly miserly, but hey, you can't have it all.

Dave Ling

KEVIN NIXON

THE UK'S BIGGEST HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE
METAL HAMMER
BULLET VS TRIVIUM: TUCK AND HEAFY FACE OFF
NINE INCH NAILS
WHILE SHE SLEEPS
CHELSEA WOLFE
HEAVY METAL PETS
PLUS
DRAGONFORCE
TYPE O NEGATIVE
SUICIDAL TENDENCIES
CATTLE DECAPITATION
BOB VYLAN
AND MORE!
Judas Purr-iest
ROB HALFORD: METAL MANIAC, KITTEN LOVER.
Available from all good newsagents and supermarkets
NEW ISSUE ON SALE NOW
THE BIGGEST BANDS. THE HEAVIEST MUSIC.
WORLD-EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS.
BUY YOUR ISSUE TODAY
PRINT EDITION AVAILABLE FROM
HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/METALHAMMERMAG
DIGITAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE ON IOS AND ANDROID
WWW.METALHAMMER.COM
/metalhammer
/metalhammeruk
/metalhammer

For the stories behind the best albums and the bands that produced them...

PROG

ASTOUNDING SOUNDS AMAZING MUSIC

has it covered.

Follow us at **www.progmagazine.com.**
Order your copy at **www.magazinesdirect.com/prg**

Dirty Honey
London Electric Ballroom

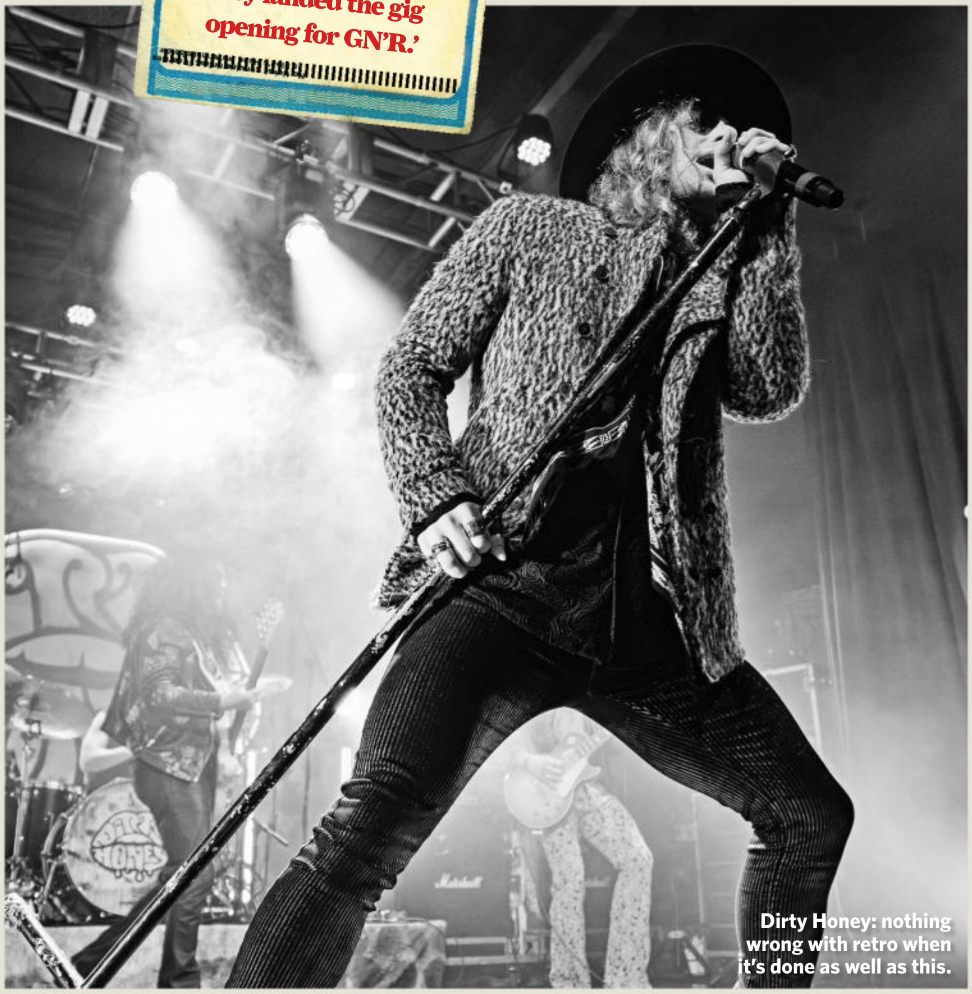
Trad rockers dish the deliciously ballsy dirt.

★ With influences not so much worn on their sleeves as tattooed across their faces, Dirty Honey aren't reinventing any wheels. Happily, their wheels of choice are pretty great. The legacies of Aerosmith, The Black Crowes and GN'R glitter through swaggering bangers like *California Dreamin'*, *Tied Up* and *Don't Put Out The Fire*; grooves are thick and tasty, Chris Robinson-style bling drips off their bodies, and wearing sunglasses indoors is basically a religion.

But it's the songs that take Dirty Honey beyond thin retro gimmickry. Now bolstered by the range of 2023's *Can't Find The Brakes* – from the fiery ballsiness of the title track to the stirring balladry of *Coming Home* – their set feels pacey and on point, without being too 'safe'. Gear shifts are deployed smartly. Covers are several cuts above your average 'classic' choices (a speedy, bluegrass-pickin' acoustic take on *Honky Tonk Women*, and a deliciously stompy, sexy blast through Prince's *Let's Go Crazy*). As their sole guitarist, John Notto balances bottom-end depth and dirt with flashy finesse. Marc Labelle revels in the role of open-shirted, mic stand-wielding frontman, reflecting the band's many nights spent opening for GN'R in stadiums across the world. It's not hard to see why they landed that gig. Or why their headline audiences keep growing, as the sea of men, women, youngsters, oldsters, vintage tour T-shirts and NWOCR-ers here attests. One nation, under a groove.

Polly Glass

'It's not hard to see why they landed the gig opening for GN'R.'



Dirty Honey: nothing wrong with retro when it's done as well as this.

BRAD MERRETT

Ash
London 100 Club

Enduringly reliable pop-rock stalwarts deliver the hits.

★ "If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find them, maybe you can hire Ash," goes the *A-Team-* aping intro. And having been hunted down by the BRITS Week 24 For War Child organisers to assist in raising funds for victims of the world's overwhelming problems, this crack commando buzz-rock trio arrive all sonic guns blazing. With singer Tim Wheeler raising his flying-V high above his head, they crash straight into two of the most fervent songs from their magnificent new album *Race The Night*: the title song, screeching by like a Nascar Weezer, and *Like A God*, a pulsing pop-metal behemoth about the egotistical uplift of sex with girls.

As the scintillating *Race The Night* proves, Ash are forefront in the generation of 90s alt.rockers who, unlike their70s and 80s forebears, clearly never intend to take their foot off the pedal and cruise into a mid-paced, middle-aged stupor. Their set is a speeding cavalcade of hits: the cascading riffs of *Petrol* into a firebrand *Jack Names The Planets*; *Angel Interceptor* giving way to the severed-brakes romance of *A Life Less Ordinary*. When new song *Crashed Out Wasted* delves into the downside of chasing one's youth to the bottom of every bottle it's merely a moment of bliss-pop respite from a torrent of classics: *Kung Fu*, *Girl From Mars*, *Burn Baby Burn*. They ain't getting all mundane, fool.

Mark Beaumont

Mandy, Indiana
Berlin Kantine am Berghain

Feel the avant-punk force.

★ A sticky-hot fondue of discordant noise-punk guitars, dirty electro rumbles, powerhouse drums and angry French-language vocals, Manchester-based quartet Mandy, Indiana are currently one of Britain's most riveting young bands live. The missing link between Siouxsie Sioux and Beatrice Dalle in *Betty Blue*, their opera-loving Parisian frontwoman Valentine Caulfield brings a compelling loose-cannon psychodrama to this Berlin show that is more visceral than theatrical, appearing on the edge of genuine mascara-streaked tears as she barks barbed protests against racism, sexism, shitty ex-boyfriends and the creeping rise of fascism.

Just one album into their short career to date, Mandy, Indiana clearly understand the primal power of a headbanging anthem. One song in this set is even called *Iron Maiden*, and several more lurch along on bulldozer riffs, militaristic back beats and grimy synthesiser drones. Crucially, drummer Alex Macdougall plays with power and precision, while Caulfield oozes leather-trousered fuck-you charisma, tumbling into the audience to become a one-woman moshpit during the high-velocity *Pashto*.

Right now the band are a glorious hot mess, both emotionally and musically. This show has a couple of unfocused moments, notably a linear electro-groove finale that is more mid-set interlude than explosive climax, but their avant-punk mostly hits the target.

Stephen Dalton

Lucinda Williams / L.A. Edwards
Birmingham Town Hall

Beating the blues with a rock'n'roll heart

★ Call it stubbornness or plain old-fashioned determination, but you can't stop Lucinda Williams. A stroke may have cruelly stripped her of her ability to play guitar, but the American singer-songwriter still released one of her most defiantly affirming records to date in 2023's *Stories From A Rock N Roll Heart*, and has maintained an active touring regimen in recent years.

Along for the ride tonight are L.A. Edwards, the country rockers plying luscious melodies, keening country guitars and soulful vocals that collectively evoke greats such as the Allmans and Lynyrd Skynyrd in a tonally gorgeous set. The indisputable highlight is *Day I Die*, in which vocalist Luke and brothers Jay (guitars) and Jerry (drums) deliver a vocal harmony that would do the Beach Boys proud.

If L.A. Edwards present a rosy vision of Americana, Lucinda Williams's is of grit under the fingernails and soot in the lungs. From the rhythmic sway of *Drunken Angel* to the defiant strut of *West Memphis*, the grunge-adjacent resigned-doom-zen of *Dust* to the hip-swinging energy of *Rock N Roll Heart* material, Williams hasn't so much got a set-list as the cast for a real-life Coen Brothers movie. Her bluesy yarl delivers tales of ne'er do wells and rogues with a romanticism that ensures you can't help but fall in love even as she breaks your heart.

Rich Hobson

The Soundtrack Of My Life

Mammoth WVH guitarist/vocalist ***Wolfgang Van Halen*** on the records, artists and gigs that are of lasting significance to him.

Interview: **Bill DeMain**

When you talk about 'dad-rock' with Wolfgang Van Halen, it has a totally different meaning. The son of the late, legendary guitarist Eddie Van Halen can still recall getting his first paternal music lesson at age of nine. "The first song I ever learned how to play on the drums was *Highway To Hell*," he says. "That's how my dad taught me to play drums. He put magazines on a table and was like: 'Here's the hi-hat, here's the snare…'" By age 15, Wolf was touring as bassist/vocalist with Van Halen, and in 2015 he debuted with his own band, Mammoth WVH (Mammoth was the name of Eddie's pre-VH band). On the heels of 2023's *Mammoth II*, Wolf is looking ahead to a headlining world tour and also opening shows for Slash, Foo Fighters and Metallica. "My whole year is planned out for me already, in the best way," he says.

THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

I had a little tape machine in my room, and mom would play lullaby versions of Mozart, for babies, I think because I was named after Mozart; my middle name was almost Amadeus [laughs]. But the first song I may have ever heard in my life was *316*, the song my dad wrote and played up against my mom's stomach when I was in there.

THE FIRST SONG THAT I PERFORMED IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE

It was for this charity event for my elementary school. There's actually footage of it in the *Distance* video from my band Mammoth. Dad and I both played, and it was the song from the end of *Caddyshack*, where the gophers are dancing – *I'm All Right* by Kenny Loggins. I had to do that intro with a little cowbell [laughs].

THE SINGER

Maynard James Keenan from Tool, and also Ian Kenny from Karnivool, the Australian band.

THE SONGWRITER

Dave Grohl. I think as a musician and a songwriter, he influences everything that I do in Mammoth. Trent Reznor, too. Those two are very big for me in terms of songwriting and lyricism.

THE GUITAR HERO

Well, of course, my dad. It's not like we didn't bond before, but when we started playing together, we were bonding on a different level. At the same time, I never wanted to be him or be another version of him. I wanted to try to play as well. I was also a big fan of Paul Gilbert growing up, which is funny because I know he's a big fan of dad as well. There's also a guitarist named Aaron Marshall. He has a band called Intervals. I love his playing.

> **"Guitar hero? Well, of course, my dad. I wanted to try to play as well."**

THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

AC/DC comes to mind. If I had to pick one album, it's probably *Powerage*. That was my dad's favorite. I remember seeing that album cover of Angus with the cables coming out of his sleeves and kind of being creeped out by it, but also really liking it.

THE BEST RECORD I MADE

With the first album, it was very important for me to find what my sound was. I think once I arrived at the song *Epiphany*, that's the moment when I found what the core of what Mammoth was. When my dad heard it, he was like: "Oh, man, this is the shit!"

MY GUILTY PLEASURE

The synth-wave band The Midnight is probably my closest thing to a 'guilty pleasure'. But I don't feel guilty. I think they're great. Growing up, I would have felt like: "Oh, not cool," because it's not rock. But the more you grow up, you get over yourself, and you stop being so cynical.

THE BEST LIVE ALBUM

Stop Making Sense by Talking Heads is the bellwether for live albums. But also *If You Want Blood You've Got It* by AC/DC. The energy and the fullness of that. They're one of those bands whose greatness can only be captured to a small amount on a studio record.

THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND EVER

Jimmy Eat World. I think they're viewed as a one-hit wonder, with *The Middle*. But there's so much more than that. They have such intricate, beautiful songwriting. Jim is a great singer. The whole band is so wonderfully capable.

MY SATURDAY NIGHT SONG

A good Saturday night would just be sitting on the couch with my wife, listening to Peter Gabriel's *Big Time*.

MY 'IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE' SONG

In Your Eyes by Peter Gabriel. That was our first dance, my wife and I. You can't go wrong with Peter Gabriel. *Don't Give Up* and *In Your Eyes* are two incredibly beautiful love songs.

THE SONG THAT MAKES ME CRY

Peter Gabriel again – *Red Rain*. I remember my dad was sitting on the floor of his closet. He was like: "Wolf, come here." And he put these big headphones on my head and cranked it to eleven. And then I remember two days before my wife and I got married, we saw Peter Gabriel at The Forum. When they played *Red Rain* I started sobbing, because it's one of my favourite songs, and it makes me think of my dad.

THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

It will need to be a really pretty song. So maybe *Red Rain*. Yeah, that would be the perfect one.

Mammoth WVH tour the UK with Slash Featuring Myles Kennedy & The Conspirators from March 30 to April 5.

WOLFGANG VAN HALEN: TRAVIS SHINN/PRESS; EDDIE VAN HALEN: GUS STEWART/GETTY

THE SOUND MACHINE
DO YOU HAVE A VINYL RECORD COLLECTION TO SELL?
We are interested in viewing ALL quality collections of vinyl records and CDs ANYWHERE throughout the UK and Ireland. We'll travel to you.
Contact The Sound Machine if you would like to talk with one of our specialists or to arrange a viewing appointment.
Reading's Longest Established Independent Record Shop
Specialists in buying and selling new and second-hand vinyl records and CDs across all genres.
info@thesoundmachine.uk.com
0118 957 5075
07786 078 361
24 Harris Arcade, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1DN
thesoundmachine.uk.com

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT
ghost stories
OUT APRIL 12TH
THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED ALBUM ADDS ANOTHER CHAPTER TO THE RECORDING LEGACY OF ONE OF ROCK'S MOST ICONIC BANDS FROM THE PAST 50 YEARS.
CD, VINYL, DIGITAL & FRONTIERS SHOP EXCLUSIVE LP (PURPLE EDITION)
FRONTIERS